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R. D. Felt  
W. H. Felt



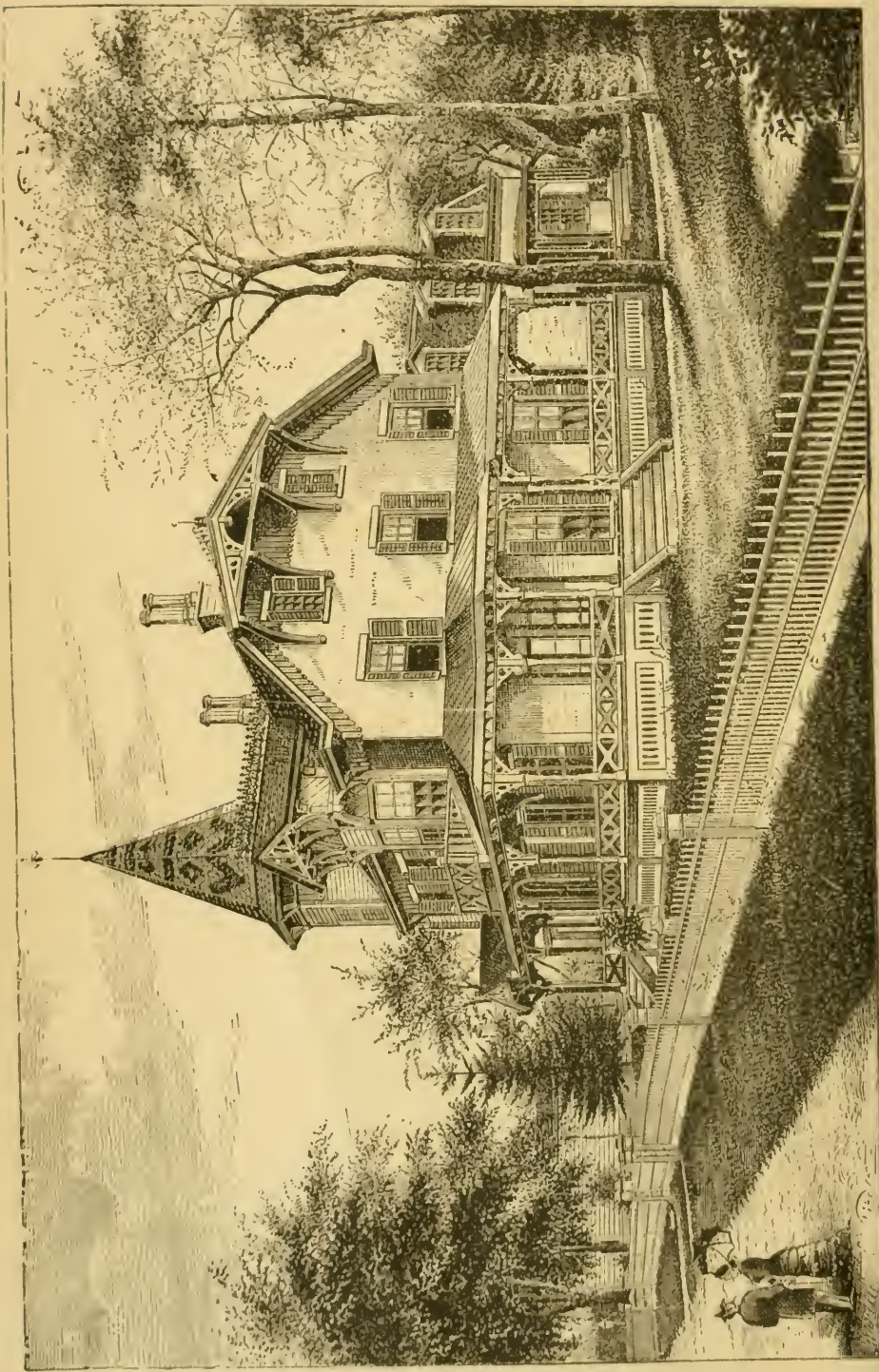








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THE HISTORY  
OF  
RIDGEFIELD, CONN.

*FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE  
PRESENT TIME.*

BY

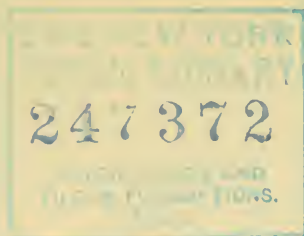
DANIEL W. TELLER,

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, RIDGEFIELD, CONN.



DANBURY:  
T. DONOVAN.

—  
1878.



247372  
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247372

TO

**My Fellow-Townsmen,**

FROM WHOM I HAVE RECEIVED SO MANY EXPRESSIONS OF KINDLY FEELING,

AND OF WHOM I SHALL HAVE ALWAYS THE MOST

GRATEFUL RECOLLECTIONS,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME, THE WORK OF SPARE MOMENTS,

IS

*DEDICATED.*

20 MAY 02





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## INTRODUCTION.

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THERE are those who *love* Ridgefield. No other word fully expresses their regard for the old town. Every thing done in it is of consequence, every thing written about it is of interest. They read and forget to criticise. They recognize in every incident of its history a gem; rough and uncut though it be, or tossed from its native bed by stranger hand, it is nevertheless a gem—fancy will brighten it and memory will set it. *For such I have written.*

A residence of nearly seven years in this beautiful town has greatly endeared it to me. Its hills and valleys have grown as familiar as the faces of its people, and if what I have written shall in any way contribute to the pleasure of my readers, I can assure them that on my part it has been also a pleasure to write.

No claim is made to originality. It has been my purpose to *collect* rather than to *compose*; to procure from all available sources such fragments of history as related to the town and arrange them in the most convenient order. The Town Records have been carefully searched, and such portions selected as were thought of greatest interest and value. The Colonial Records, so far as published, have also been examined.

In short, every available means of information has been made use of, and I would take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to those who have so kindly aided me in

every possible way. Especially do I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Elijah Thomas, Mr. Gould Rockwell, Mr. George Boughton, and Town Clerk Hiram K. Scott, Esq.

I am also greatly indebted to the "Library Association of the Athenæum" of Hartford, to "Hollister's History of Connecticut," which I esteem the most accurate as well as the most enjoyable history of the State, and to S. G. Goodrich's "Recollections of a Lifetime," which gives in the most pleasing manner the romance of the town.

The necessity for collecting as speedily as possible all items of history must be apparent to every one who for a moment considers the rapidity with which the opportunities for information are being diminished. Records grow old and fade out. Men grow old and die. Since the work was commenced several of our oldest inhabitants, whom I consulted on various points, have passed away. Every year reduces the ranks of those who have received directly from their parents and grand-parents the recollections and traditions which help so much to explain incidents of history.

If what I have written shall seem to deal too largely with the simple statement of fact, of "unvarnished truth," an apology may be found in the desire to give only that which should be of actual utility. My personal friends will also consider that I have written in the immediate shadow of a great sorrow. In the quiet shade of our cemetery is a grave whose making has left my house unto me desolate; my interest in the town is thereby insured. It will be of all places on God's fair earth the most sacred to me while life lasts, and no less sacred at death, for here I too hope to lie down to rest "*when the night cometh.*"

# HISTORY OF RIDGEFIELD.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### SURVEY AND PURCHASE OF TOWN TRACT.

IN the month of May, 1708, a number of the inhabitants of the town of Norwalk petitioned General Assembly, then in session at Hartford, to grant them "libertie to purchase of the Indians a certain tract of land, bounded south on Norwalk bounds, north-east on Danbury, and west upon York line."

Such "libertie" was granted the said petitioners "provided it doth not prejudice any former grant; this Assembly reserving to themselves a power for the settlement and allotment of the land so to be purchased among the petitioners, and such others as the said General Assembly shall judge meet."

On the 30th of September, 1708, such a purchase was made, as the following deed will show:

*"To all people to whom these presents shall Come Greeting &c.*  
Know ye that I Catoonah Sachem of Ramapoo Indians and Associates within her Majesties province of New York in America. For & in Consideration of y<sup>e</sup> sum of One Hundred Pounds as current money of said province. To us in hand before the ensealing hereof well and Truly Paid by John Belden, Samuell Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamor James Brown Benjamin Wilson, Joseph Birchard, John Whitne Sen<sup>r</sup>,

Matthias Saint John Benjamin Hickcock, John Beebe Samuel Saint John, John Bouton Joseph Keeler, Samuel Smith Junior, Jonathan Stevens, Daniell Olmsted, Richard Olmsted, John Stirdevant, Samuel Keeler Jun<sup>r</sup>, Joseph Bouton, Jonathan Rockwell, Edmond Wareing, Joseph Whitne, Daniel Hait, Thomas Hyott, James Bennedick, Joseph Crampton, Ebenezer Sension, Matthew Saint John, all of the Town of Norwalk in y<sup>e</sup> County of Fairfield, within her Majesties Colony of Connecticut in New England, and Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield, & Samuells Smith, of the Town of Milford in y<sup>e</sup> County of Newhaven & Colonie aforesaid. The Receipt whereof we do hereby acknowledg, and our selves therewith fully Satisfied, and Contented, and thereof and of every part and percell thereof Do Exonerat Acquitt & discharge the said John Belden, Samuells Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamor, James Brown, Benjamin Wilson, Joseph Birchard, John Whitne Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthias Saint John, Benjamin Hickcock, John Beebe, Samuells Saint John, John Bouton, Joseph Keeler, Samuells Smith, Jonathan Stevens, Daniell Olmsted, Richard Olmsted, John Stirdevant, Samuells Keeler Jun<sup>r</sup>, Joseph Bouton, Jonathan Rockwell, Edmond Wareing, Joseph Whitne, Daniell Hait, Thomas Hyott, James Bennedick, Joseph Crampton, Ebenezer Sension, Matthew Saint John, Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield, and Samuel Smith, their heirs executors, administrators forever by these presents. Have given, granted bargained, sold Allowed Conveyed and Confirmed, and by these presents Do freely fully and absolutely give grant bargain sell, Aliene Convey and Confirm unto them the said John Belden, Samuells Keeler Jun<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamor, James Brown, Benjamin Wilson, Joseph Birchard, John Whitne Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthias Saint John, Benjamin Hickcock, John Beebe, Samuells Saint John, John Bouton, Joseph Keeler, Samuells Smith, Jonathan Stevens, Daniell Olmsted, Richard Olmsted, John Stirdevant, Samuells Keeler, Joseph Bouton, Jonathan Rockwell, Edmond Wareing, Joseph Whitne, Daniel Hait, Thomas Hyott, James Bennedick, Joseph Crampton, Ebenezer Sension, Matthew Saint John, Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield, and Samuells Smith, their Associates heirs and assigns forever. A Certain Tract of Land Scituat Lying and being so esteemed within her Majesties Colony of Conecticott aforesaid Butted and Bounded as followeth, at a Rock with stones Lay'd thereon that lyeth upon y<sup>e</sup> west side of Norwalk River about twenty rod northward of the Crossing or where Danbury old Cart path Crosseth the River which said Rock is the South East Corner and from said Corner a line Runneth upwards unto Umpewange pond to a White Oak Tree,



Standing by the Northwest Corner of said Pond, the said tree being marked and Stones Lay'd about it and is the North East Corner, and from the said Corner Tree, another line Running near Two points to the North of West into a pond Called Nesopack and Continues y<sup>e</sup> Same Coarse untill it meets with a second pond Called Aokkeels, Crossing by y<sup>e</sup> south End of both ponds, and from thence Running Near West untill it Extends to a place Called Mamanasquag, where is a Oak Tree Marked on y<sup>e</sup> North Side of the outlet of water that Comes out from a sort of a grassy pond, which is known and Called by Said Name, which tree is the North West Corner, and from said Tree another line Runing South bearing to y<sup>e</sup> East About one mile and half. Runing by y<sup>e</sup> East side of another Mountain Called Asoquatah untill it meets Stanford Bound line, about a quarter of a mile to y<sup>e</sup> Eastward of Cross River pond, where stands a Marked White Oak tree with Stones about it, and is y<sup>e</sup> South West Corner, and from Said Marked tree a long by Stanford line untill it Comes to Norwalk purchase and so by Said Purchase Bounds to the Said Rock at the South East Corner. Containing by Estimation Twenty Thousand Acres, be it more or less. The Four Corners of Said Tract of Land being Called by the following Indian Names South East Corner 'Wheer Cock' North East Corner 'Wononkpakoonk' North West Corner 'Mamanasquag' South West Corner 'Narahawmis.'

"To Have and to Hold, the Said granted and bargained premises with all the appurtenances priviledges, and Comodities to the same, belonging or in anywise Appertaining to them y<sup>e</sup> Above Named persons their Associates heirs and assigns forever, to them and their only proper Use bennefitt and behoof forever. And I the Said Catoonah and Associats for ourselves our heirs Executors, administrators, Do Covenant promise and grant to and with the above Said persons their associates heirs and assigns, that before the Ensealing hereof. We are the true Sole and Lawfull Owners of y<sup>e</sup> above bargained premises and by Native Right Seized and possessed of the Same in our own proper Right as a Good perfect and Absolute Estate of Inheritance in fee Simple and have in Ourselves good Right full power and Sufficient Authority to grant bargain Sell Convey and Confirms said Bargained premises in manner as above said, and that the said John Belden, and the rest above said their Associats heirs and assigns Shall and may from time to time, and at all times forever hereafter, by force and virtue of these presents Lawfully and peaceably and quietly Have, Hold, Use, Occupie, possess and enjoy the said Demissed and bargained premisses.

“With the appurtenances free and Clear, and freely and Clearly Aquitted Exonerated & Discharged of from all and all Mannor of former and other gifts grants bargains, Sales Leasses Mortgages, Wills, Intails Joynters Dowries Judgements Executions Incumbrances & Extents.

“Furthermore I the said Catoonah and Associates for ourselves our heirs Executors administrators Do Covenant and Ingage y<sup>e</sup> above Demissed premisses to them the said John Belden, and the rest above said, their Associates heirs and assigns, against the Lawfull Claims, or Demands of any person or persons whatsoever, forever hereafter to Warrent secure and Defend.

“In Witness whereof we have hereunto Sett our hands and Seals this Thirtieth Day of September in the Seventh year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady Ann Queen of England &c. and in y<sup>e</sup> year of our Lord God, 1708.

“Signed Sealed and Delivered in presence of

JOHN HOLMES, Jr.,	CATOONAH, GOOTQUAS, WAWKAMAWWEE.
JOSEPH SEELEY,	WOQUACOMICK, MAIHE, NARANeka.
JOHN COPP,	WASPAHCHAIN, TAWPORNICK, CAWWEHORIN.

“This Above Written Bill of Sale is acknowledged by y<sup>e</sup> Grantors this 30th Day of September 1708.

“Before me, SAMUEL HAIT,

*“Justice of Peace.”*

The purchase having been made, General Assembly, in session at Hartford, May, 1709, appointed Major Peter Burr, of Fairfield, John Copp, of Norwalk, and Josiah Starr, of Danbury, a committee to make a survey of the aforesaid tract of land, and to lay it out for a town plat, and to make return to the General Assembly at New Haven in the following October “of their doings therein, and of their opinion how many inhabitants the said tract of land may admit and contain.”

This was accordingly done, and the following grant was made by General Assembly in session at New Haven, October 13th, 1709.

“*WHEREAS*, the Generall Assembly of this Colony, Holden at Hartford May 13<sup>th</sup> 1708—Upon the petition of Sundry of the Inhabitants of the town of Norwalk praying for liberty to purchase of the Indians a certain Tract of Land lying within this Colony Bounded Northerly and Northeasterly with the Town of Danbury, Southerly with the Said Town of Norwalk and West or Westerly with y<sup>e</sup> line or boundary between this Colony & y<sup>e</sup> province of New York, to the end they might make a Plantation there, and settle upon the Same— Did Grant to the said Petitioners a liberty to purchase the same Tract of Land.

“And pursuant thereto y<sup>e</sup> said Petitioners did buy and purchase of Catoonah a Sachem—and other Indians the aforesaid tract of Land as by their Deed of Conveyance thereof under their hands and Seals bearing Date September 30 1708 now laid before this Assembly had been made appear. And whereas the General Assembly of this Colony Holden at Hartford, May y<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>th</sup>, 1709. Did desire and Impower Major Peter Burr M<sup>r</sup> John Copp, and M<sup>r</sup> Josiah Starr to make a Survey of the said tract of Land and to lay out a Town Platt there and to Make Return of their doings therein to this Assembly at this time, and the said Peter Burr & John Copp in pursuance thereof, haveing taken a view of the said Tract of Land, & have thereupon made a Return or Report thereof to this Assembly which hath been read and Considered.

“This Assembly Do now give and Grant to the said petitioners, that is to say to the Persons hereafter named viz John Belden Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamor Matthias St John, Benjamin Wilson Samuel St John James Brown Benjamin Hickcock Joseph Keeler, Samuel Keeler Jr Samuel Smith Matthew St John Jonathan Stevens Daniel Olmstead John Sturdevant Jonathan Rockwell Joseph Whitney Thomas Hyatt James Benedict Joseph Crampton & Richard Olmstead of the said Town of Norwalk and Thomas Smith Thomas Canfield Samuel Smith & Ebenezer Smith of y<sup>e</sup> Town of Milford, and to their heirs and assigns forever, All the afore Mentioned Tract or Parcel of Land Butted & Bounded as followeth, that is to say, On the South or Southerly with the said Town of Norwalk, On the West or Westerly with the line or boundary between this Colony and the Province of New York, On the East or Easterly partly with the line to be continued and Run like unto the line between y<sup>e</sup> said Town of Norwalk and the Town of Fairfield from the North End thereof unto a certain black Oak tree marked with Letters and haveing Stones layed about the Same Standing upon the Mountain, commonly caled the West Cedar Mountain and partly with a direct and Strait line to be run from said Black Oak Tree to a certain

Large White Oak Tree marked and having Stones layed about it Standing at or near the North West Corner of Umpewange pond. And on the North or Northerly with a direct Strait Line to be run from the said White Oak Tree to the South Westerly Corner of the Town of Danbury and continued unto the Said Line or Boundary between this Colony and the Province of New York be the said Tract of Land more or Less, With all and Singular the rights Members and appurtenances thereof. And this Assembly do hereby Enact & Grant That the said Tract of Land shall be an Intire Township of it self, and shall be Called and Known by the name of Ridgfield, and shall be held and enjoyed by the said John Belden Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup> Matthew Seamor Matthias St John Benjamin Wilson Samuel St John James Brown Benjamin Hickock Joseph Keeler Samuel Keeler J<sup>r</sup> Samuel Smith Matthew St. John Jonathan Stevens Daneel Olmstead John Sturdevant Jonathan Rockwell Joseph Whitney Thomas Hyatt, James Benedict Joseph Crampton and Richard Olmstead of Norwalk and Thomas Smith Thomas Canfield Samuel Smith and Ebenezer Smith of the Town of Milford and their heirs and Assigns in Equal and Even Shares, & be divided accordingly into lotts and parcells from time to time by the Order of the Major Vote of them, to be accounted by the Major part of interests therein. Provided that this act shall not be construed to the prejudice of any former Grant of this Court and provided always—Nevertheless that if the said John Belden Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup> Matthew Seamor Matthew St John Benjamin Wilson Samuel St John James Brown Benjamin Hickock Joseph Keeler Samuel Keeler J<sup>r</sup> Samuel Smith Matthew St John Jonathan Stevens Daneel Olmstead John Sturdevant Jonathan Rockwell Joseph Whitney Thomas Hyatt James Bennedick Joseph Crampton and Richard Olmstead Thomas Smith Thomas Canfield Samuel Smith and Ebenezer Smith their heirs assigns or associates. Do not or shall not within four Years next after the date of this act or Grant, Settle or Dwell upon the said tract of Land to y<sup>e</sup> number of twenty Eight families, and after continue and Dwell there for the Space of four Years next following, that then it shall be in the Liberty and power of this Assembly to grant of the said Tract of Land Settlement to any other persons as they shall see cause.”

“ A true copy of Record

“ Test

“ CALEB STANLY, *Secretary.*”

The patent was not issued until the year 1714, and reads as follows :



“*WHEREAS* the Governour, Councill and Representatives of Her Majesties Colony of Connecticutt in New England in General Court assembled, Did by an Act bearing Date Octob<sup>r</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Anno Domini 1709, Grant unto John Belden, Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamore, Matthias Saintjohn, Benjamin Willson, Samuel Saintjohn, James Brown, Benjamin Hickcock, Joseph Keller, Samuel Keeler, Jun<sup>r</sup>, Sam<sup>l</sup> Smith, Matthew Saintjohn, Jonathan Stevens, Daneel Olmsted, John Sturdevant, Jonathan Rockwell, Joseph Whitne, Thomas Hyatt, James Benedict, Joseph Crampton, and Richard Olmsted, all of y<sup>e</sup> Town of Norwalk, in y<sup>e</sup> County of Fairfield in y<sup>e</sup> Colony aforesaid, and Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield, Samuel Smith, and Ebenezer Smith of the Town of Milford in y<sup>e</sup> County of New Haven, in y<sup>e</sup> Colony aforesaid, One Certain Tract of land, as by the said act doth full appear, the same tract of land, being situate, butted, and bounded as in the said act and Grant is Expressed, Viz, On y<sup>e</sup> South or Southerly with y<sup>e</sup> said Town of Norwalk, On the West, or westerly with the line or boundary between this Colony and the Province of New York, On the East or Eastwardly partly with a line to be Continued and run like unto the line between the said Town of Norwalk and the Town of Fairfield, from the North end thereof unto a black Oak tree mark’t with letters & having stones laid about the same, Standing upon the mountain Commonly Called y<sup>e</sup> west Cedar mountain, and partly with a direct and streight line to be run from the said black Oak tree to a Certain large white Oak Tree mark’t, and having stones laid about it. Standing at or Near the Norwest Corner of Umpawaug Pond, and on the North or Northely with a direct Strait line to be run from y<sup>e</sup> said white Oak Tree to the Southwest Corner of the Town of Danbury and Continued unto the said line or boundary between this Colony, and the Province of New York, be the same Tract of land more or less, all which appears by the aforesaid Act, And Whereas they, the said John Belden, Samuel Keelar Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamore, Matthias Saintjohn, Benjamin Willson, Sam<sup>l</sup> St. John, James Brown, Benjamin Hickcock, Joseph Keeler, Sam<sup>l</sup> Keeler Jun<sup>r</sup>, Sam<sup>l</sup> Smith, Matthew Saintjohn. Jonathan Stevens, Daniel Olmsted, John Sturdevant, Jonathan Rockwell, Joseph Whitne, Thomas Hyatt, James Benedict, Joseph Crampton, and Richard Olmstedd, Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield, Samuel Smith, and Ebenezer Smith pursuant to the law Title, the Tenure of Our lands, have made application for a Pattent, for the Confirmation of the said Tract of land to them, their heirs and assigns, Know all men Therefore by these presents, that the Governour and Company of Her Majestie To Colony of Connecticutt by Virtue of the Power

Granted to them, by our Late Sovereign Lord King Charles the Second, of blessed memory in and by his said Majesties Lett<sup>rs</sup> Patents under the Great Seal of England bearing Date the Twenty third day of Aprill in the fourteenth year of his Reign ; Have Given, Granted, Ratified and Confirmed, and by these presents, Do Give Grant, Ratifie and Confirm both for themselves, their heirs and Successors, unto the said John Belden, Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamore, Matthias St<sup>t</sup> John, Benjamin Willson, Sam<sup>l</sup> St John, James Brown, Benjamin Hickcock, Joseph Keeler, Sam<sup>l</sup> Keeler Jun<sup>r</sup>, Sam<sup>l</sup> Smith, Matthew St John, Jonathan Stevens Daniel Olmstedd, John Sturdevant, Jonathan Rockwell, Joseph Whitne, Thomas Hyatt, James Benedict, Joseph Crampton, and Richard Olmsted, Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield, Sam<sup>l</sup> Smith and Ebenezer Smith and to their heirs and Assigns for ever all, and singular the above mentioned Tract of land and Every part thereof, with all and Singular rights proffitts, priviledges Commodities, Emoluments and appurtenances what forever To the said Tract of land belonging or in any wise appertaining, To Have And To Hold the said Tract of land, and every part thereof unto them the said John Belden, Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup>, Matthew Seamore, Matthias St John, Benjamin Willson, Sam<sup>l</sup> Saintjohn, James Brown, Benjamin Hickcock, Joseph Keeler, Samuel Keeler Jun<sup>r</sup>, Sam<sup>l</sup> Smith, Matthew Saintjohn, Jonathan Stevens, Daniel Olmsted, John Sturdevant, Jonathan Rockwell, Joseph Whitne, Thomas Hyatt, James Benedict, Joseph Crampton and Richard Olmstedd, Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield, Samuel Smith and Ebenezer Smith and To their heirs and assigns forever and to their Only proper benefitt and behoof, from the day of the date hereof, and from time to time and att all times forever hereafter as a good, sure, lawfull, absolute, and Indefeafable Estate of inheritance in Fee Simple, without any Condition Limitation use or other thing to alter, or make void the same. And in such Shares and in such proportions, as they either already have or hereafter shall agree for y<sup>e</sup> Division and partition of the same, To Hold of her Majesty, Her heirs and Successors, as of her Majesties Mannor of East Greenwich in the County of Kent, in the Kingdom of England in free and Common socage, and not in Capitee, Nor by Knights service Yielding and paying therefor to Our Sovereign Lady the Queen her heirs and Successors forever, Only y<sup>e</sup> fifth part of all the Oar of Gold and Silver which from Time to Time and att all times forever hereafter Shall be there Gotten had or obtained, in Lieu of all Services, Duties and demands what forever according to Charter. In Witness whereof we have caused the Seal of the Colony to be hereunto affixed in Hart-

ford y<sup>e</sup> Twenty second day of May in the Thirteenth year of the reign of Our Sovereign Lady Anne, by the Grace of God, Queen of Great Brittain France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith &c Anno Domini 1714."

"G: SALTONSTALL *Governor*

"By His Hon<sup>d</sup> Command

HEZ: WYLLYS *Secry.*

"Recorded in y<sup>e</sup> Publick records of y<sup>e</sup> Colony of Connecticutt Second book of entries of Pattents and Surveys of lands Folio 52, 53, 54.

"p<sup>r</sup> HEZ: WYLLYS *Secrett.*"

## CHAPTER II.

### SETTLEMENT.

AFTER purchasing the town tract, the next thing in order was to settle it. This the petitioners proceeded at once to do. It had previously been called by the Indians *Caudatowa*, or high-land. This name was probably suggested by a north and south ridge, situated nearly in the geographical centre of the town, and rising to the height of eight hundred feet above the level of the sea—the same ridge which gave it its present name.

The proprietors at once fixed upon this ridge as the most desirable point at which to begin a settlement. A street six rods wide was surveyed, to run north and south along the eastern declivity of the ridge, and on either side of the street ; home lots of two and one half acres were laid out, and in the rear of these, additional lots of five acres, making in all seven and one half acres.

After the lots had been surveyed and numbered, that there might be no favoritism shown, but that all might share equally, a lottery was formed of the numbers, and each man was given the lot corresponding to the number drawn by him.

Subsequent divisions were made of the plough land, meadow land, and bogs. The following minutes from the town records will further explain the order and manner of these divisions :



*“The several Acts Relating to y<sup>e</sup> Home Lotts & the addition made to the Same is as followeth*

“Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 1708 Voted by said proprietors that a Commettee shall be chosen to Lay out the Town Plott

“At the Said Meeting the said proprietors by a Major Vote appointed and made Choise of M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup> Matthew Seamer, Joseph Bouton with John Copp to Lay out the Town Plott

“At the said Meeting Voted by said proprietors that the Home Lotts now to be Lay’d out by said Committee shall be Two Acres and one half acre.

“At the said Meeting y<sup>e</sup> Said Proprietors by a Major Vote Resolves and agrees that there shall be a Division of Land added to the Rear of the Home Lotts to the Number of five acres to Each Division. And the said Committee is Impowered to act their best Skill & Judgement to Equalize the Want of quality by adding or allowing quantity to such Home Lotts & Division of Addition as they in judgement may find wanting

“At a Meeting of the said Proprietors Convened in Norwalk Nov y<sup>e</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> 1708

“The above said Committee makes a Return of their doings in and about the Home Lotts & y<sup>e</sup> addition made to y<sup>e</sup> Rear of y<sup>e</sup> same. With an account of such Disproportion of their quality, that by all that they had done in y<sup>e</sup> matter of equalizing them there still needed a further Allowance to some Lotts as they were by them Layd out with the Division added to y<sup>e</sup> Rear of them

“Upon which Return made by said Committee The said proprietors at y<sup>e</sup> said meeting by a Major Vote Impower said Committee to Regulate that matter according to y<sup>e</sup> best of their judgements to add to such Home Lotts & Division annexed. Or to any other Division of Lands to be Lay’d out to any such proprietor, to whom such Home Lott with y<sup>e</sup> anext Division shall fall to when Drawn, that by said Committee shall be Judged Wanting in quality with the Generality of y<sup>e</sup> best of the Home Lots and annex Divisions

“At a meeting of y<sup>e</sup> said Proprietors Convened in Norwalk November y<sup>e</sup> 25 1708

“Voted by Said proprietors that the Lotterie prepared for y<sup>e</sup> Distribution of the Home Lotts with y<sup>e</sup> anext Division, unto the said proprietors Shall at this time be Drawn, Which Lottery is methodized as followeth

“Beginning on the East Tear of Lotts, y<sup>e</sup> southermost Lott joining to the Land Lay’d out for a burying Yard—Calling that Lott the first in

Number, & sucsevively Northward to the 12<sup>th</sup> Lott and then begining at y<sup>e</sup> Northermost Lott on the West tear numbering said Lott y<sup>e</sup> thirteenth Lott and so succsessively Southward to the Twenty fifth Lott.

“ The Draught of which Lottery was as followeth .

No.		No.	
1	Samuel Saint John	14	John Sturdevant
2	Samuel Keeler Jun <sup>r</sup>	15	Thomas Hyot
3	Jonathan Rockwell	16	Benjamin Wilson
4	Thomas Caufield	17	Benjamin Hickock
5	The Proprietors Reserve	18	Matthew Saint John
6	Matthias Saint John	19	Joseph Keeler
7	Joseph Whitney	20	Matthew Seamer
8	Samuel Smith of Milford	21	James Bennedick
9	James Brown	22	Joseph Crampton
10	John Belden	23	Samuel Smith
11	Richard Olmsted	24	Daniel Olmsted
12	Thomas Smith	25	Samuel Keeler Sen <sup>r</sup>
13	Jonathan Stevens		

It is a matter of interest to locate the original lots. The actual number of feet fronting the street, as well as the exact boundary of each division, is not certainly known, and cannot at this late day be positively determined ; but the relative location of the lots in almost every instance may be ascertained by consulting carefully the town records.

Lot No. 1 was where Mr. John S. Keeler now resides.

No. 2 was immediately north of this, and lying between it and the corner south of Mr. Abraham Holmes's.

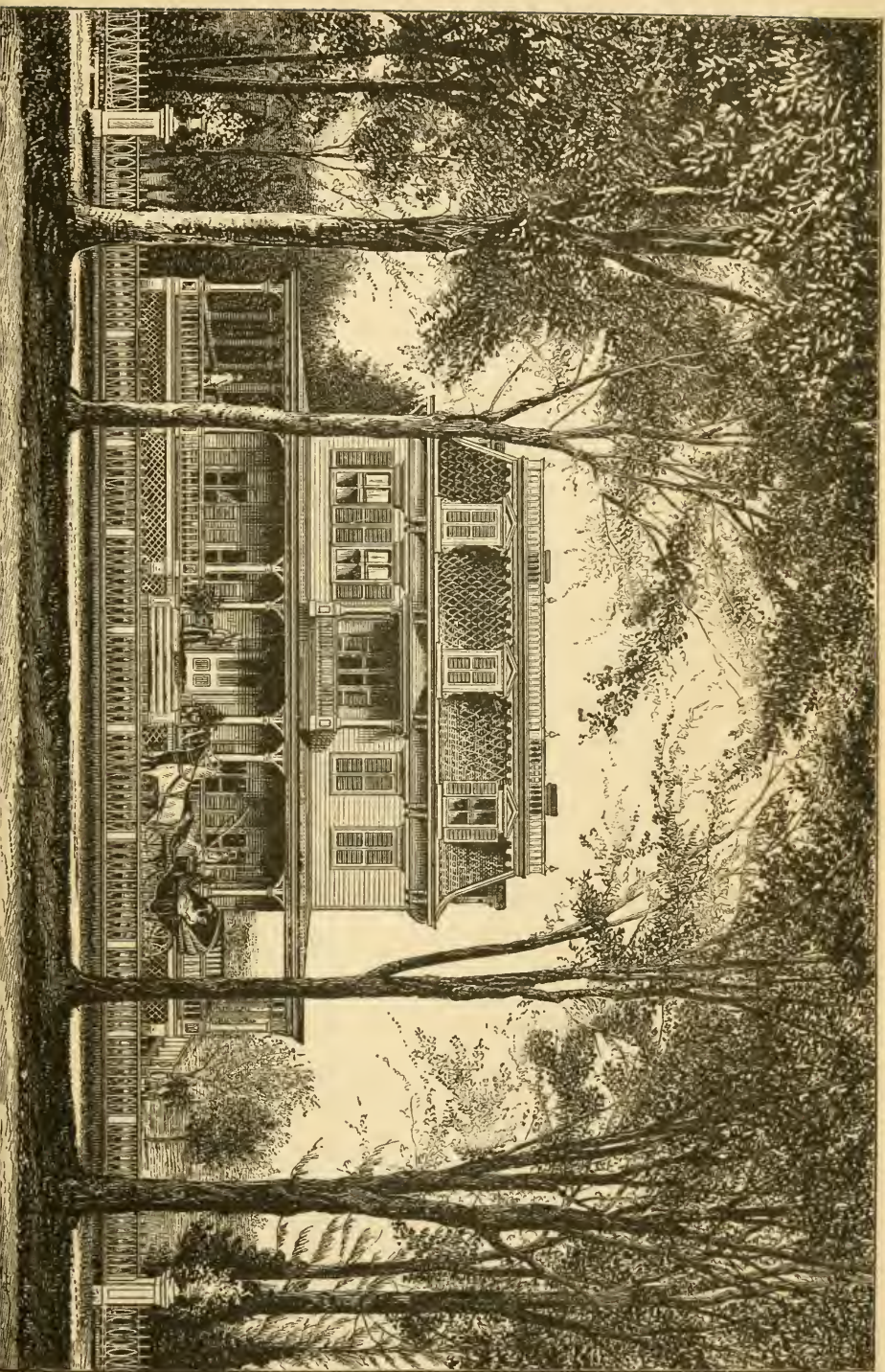
Nos. 3 and 4 extended from Mr. Abraham Holmes's to the present residence of Mrs. Mary Hatch.

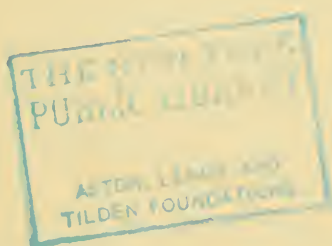
No. 5 was the one now owned and occupied by Mrs. Irad Hawley.

No. 6 extended from the south side of Mr. Henry E. Hawley's residence to the north side of Mr. Joshua I. King's garden.

No. 7 extended from the north side of Mr. King's gar-







den to the corner of the street north of Mr. Sereno Hurlbutt's residence.

No. 8 was the lot now owned and occupied by Phineas Lounsbury, Esq.

No. 9 is now occupied by Philip L. Barhite, Esq., and Dr. William S. Todd.

No. 10 extended from the fence south of Mrs. Hyatt's house to the fence north of Mr. Samuel J. Barlow.

No. 11 embraced the Town-House lot, Mr. L. C. Seymour's house and store, and Mrs. Wescott's house.

No. 12 extended from the residence of the late Josiah Danchy, Esq., to the road north of Mr. Isaac Osborn's.

No. 13 included the present residences of Mr. Henry Mead, Mr. Elijah L. Thomas, and Mr. Keeler Danchy.

Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17 extended from the fence north of the Episcopal Church to the corner south of the residence of J. Howard King, Esq.

Nos. 18, 19, 20, 21 extended from the road north of Mrs. Sarah Jewitt's to the one south of Mr. David K. Hoyt's.

Nos. 23, 24, 25 extended from the corner now occupied by the carriage manufactory of Mr. Ebenezer Jones, to the fence south of the residence of Mr. William Benedict.

It will be observed that lot No. 22 is omitted in this reckoning ; the reason for which is found in the fact that it nowhere appears on our town records after it was numbered and drawn. The inference is that it was thrown out ; for we find Mr. Joseph Crampton, who drew the lot, located on the land now owned by Mrs. Shaw and Mr. L. O. Northrop.



The next spring, after the division of the home lots, the proprietors proceeded to divide such parts of the outlying lands as would be most suitable for grazing, ploughing, and mowing, sharing equally in each.

The following will show the method of such division :

*“ At a Meeting of said proprietors Convened March 1<sup>st</sup> 1708<sup>9</sup>*

*“ The proprietors, by a Major Vote do agree upon a Division of Plow Land to be Lay’d out as soon as may be*

*“ At the said Meeting the Proprietors by a Major Vote have chosen Mr Samuel Keeler Sen<sup>r</sup> Matthias Saint John and Samuel Smith for their Committee—To take a view of what Lands ‘are suitable to Lay out for a Division of Plow Land within the Limits of One Mile and a half from the Center of the Town Plott, and Lay out what Land they so find into such Divisions as the Land will allow according to the number of proprietors.”*

*“ At a meeting Convened of said Proprietors March 28<sup>th</sup> 1709*

*“ The said Committee make Return of their Doings on the Land found within y<sup>e</sup> Limits stated in y<sup>e</sup> Vote passed March the 1<sup>st</sup> as above said, fixing upon six acres to a Division, and accordingly to their best skill and Judgement have Lay’d out a number of Divisions equal to the number of proprietors, allowing to some Divisions more measure than y<sup>e</sup> fixt quantity to equalize them with the better Divisions.”*

It will be observed in every instance that the quality of the land determined the quantity. No home lot fell below two and one half acres, but it might consist of three or three and one half acres if it was deemed of poor quality. So also the five-acre lots in the rear might have five acres in them, or more. Then there would be sections of land not reckoned, and these might lie between two divisions ; afterward to be appropriated to some new-comer. This would apply to the outlying lands rather than to the village lots.

In the spring of 1709, on the 22d of April, Ebenezer Smith, of Milford, by a major vote of the proprietors, was permitted to come in and share equally with the







twenty-five. He settled on the lot where George Smith, Esq., now resides. This property has never passed out of the Smith family.

Joseph Benedict, of Norwalk, was admitted in like manner on the 31st of the following October. He settled on the lot lying between Mr. William Benedict's and Mr. L. O. Northrop's, or, as originally designated, between Mr. Samuel Keeler's and Mr. Joseph Crampton's.

In anticipation of their necessities as a town, a reservation was made of one twenty-eighth part of all the purchased lands for a blacksmith.

In the year 1712 the proprietors took the following action in reference to Mr. Benjamin Burt :

*"At a Meeting of the Proprietors of Ridgefield at Ridgefield May the 6<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1712*

"The said proprietors by their Major Vote Do Grant to Mr. Benjamin Burt now resident of Norwalk, a certain Right of Lands, Reserved by them for a Blacksmith, which Right of land contains one twenty eighth part of all the purchased Land contained within the limits of their granted propriety or Township With also a priviledge to purchase with them a like part or proportion of the unpurchased lands that lyeth within y<sup>e</sup> granted Bounds of their Township (of the Native proprietors thereof) with al the Several Divisions already Layed out under said Right.

"To be to him, his heirs and assigns absolutely and as fully to have To Have Hold, use occupie possess and enjoy in as full and free a manner, with the rest of the proprietors of said Granted Township, Provided he the said Benjamin Burt, pay to Joseph Keeler of said Town of Ridgfield y<sup>e</sup> sum of nine pounds in money according to the agreement now made with him, And with all convenient speed dwell as an inhabitant among them in order to carry on the trade of a Blacksmith among them, And forthwith Supply them with an able hand, to perform such Smith work for them, that they stand in need of untill he shall remove with his family among them and be thereby able to perform such work for them himself, or by others under his care and Command, And it is to be understood that if the said Burt (shall at

any time before the full Termination of four Years from May the Ninth 1712,) have a Mind to remove from them, he shall not give, grant, bargain, sell Directly nor Indirectly make any Alienation of said Right of Land granted to him, but to such a person as shall be found capable to carry on the work of a Blacksmith among them. And further the said Burt doth hereby promise and Oblidge himself faithfully to use his utmost endeavour to settle a Blacksmith on said Right. If he shall incline to remove from them after his continuence among them y<sup>e</sup> term of Years above said

“ The above said y<sup>e</sup> original Draught of said act

“ Test RICHARD OLMSTED *Town Clerk*

“ Recorded November 28, 1712

“ Per me JOHN COPP *Recorder.*”

Mr. Burt settled on the lot now occupied by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It is not certainly known when Rev. Thomas Hawley came into the town, but he is known to have been here in the following year, 1713. The fact is proven by his signature annexed to a deed as a witness.

On the 30th of January, 1716, the first miller agreed with the proprietors to erect a grist mill. The covenant then entered into with the proprietors, in consideration of one twenty-ninth part of the purchased lands, is as follows, and is known by the name of the Mill Covenant :

“ *To all Christian People to whom these Presents shall Come Greeting* Know Ye that I Daniel Sherwood of Ridgefield in the County of Fairfield and Colony of Connecticut in New England, For and in Consideration of a bill of sale of Lands received of the Proprietors of Ridgfield and bearing date with these presents, which is to my full satisfaction. For and upon which consideration aforesaid I the said Daniel Sherwood for myself heirs and assigns, Do by these presents, engage unto and Covenant with y<sup>e</sup> said Proprietors of Ridgfield their heirs assigns, and associates, for the faithfull punctual, universal fullfilment of this Covenant, following in every Condition Clause and article hereof viz.

“ Imprimis, I y<sup>e</sup> said Daniel Sherwood do engage for myself heirs

and assigns to erect a good sufficient Grist Mill on the Outlet of Mamasguog Pond so called and known by the Proprietors of Ridgfield.

“2<sup>d</sup>ly I declare myself bound hereby to maintain y<sup>e</sup> same and uphold it (or another in the same place) always in good rigg, and order for grinding.

“3<sup>d</sup>ly I covenant for myself heirs and assigns upon y<sup>e</sup> Teusdays and Fridays of every week (when ever water may be had by y<sup>e</sup> use of means) to grind for said Proprietors, their heirs assigns and associates all sorts of their grain, well and sufficiently, making good and well conditioned meal, and to take but, and no more, than three quarts out of each bushel of Indian corn, and two quarts out of each bushel of wheat or rye, and one quart of each bushel of malt (that I my heirs or assigns shall grind) for toll.

“Fourthly What was of grain shall be brought to y<sup>e</sup> said Mill by the said proprietors, their heirs assigns or associates on the forementioned grinding days, more than can be ground on said days, that it shall on the next following week days be ground without delay, and the said Sherwood do hereby bind and oblige myself heirs and assigns that whatever grain shall be brought on or before any of the said grinding days (on any day) more than the mill grinds on said days, shall be ground out of hand, whether men wait and attend on the grinding thereof or not.

“Furthermore, (according to the original intent of both parties) I y<sup>e</sup> said Sherwood do bind and Oblige myself heirs and assigns by virtue of this Covenant (in case of failure and nonperformance of every clause, article and condition according to plain intent, or upon neglect of due means, and all thorough, seasonable, and faithfull endeavours upon any breaches whatsoever, to rectify keep and maintain y<sup>e</sup> same with every thing necessary and essential thereunto, in good trim and order, for the ends before, covenanted, and accordingly improve it) I say I the said Sherwood by virtue hereof, do bind myself heirs and assigns to forfeit and deliver up y<sup>e</sup> said Mill and Stream unto the said proprietors with all its properties and appurtenances and privileges whatsoever in anywise thereunto, shall at the time of forfeiture appertain, hereby Covenanting not to export or carry away any part property or utensill whatsoever thereunto belonging and do upon condition of failure in covenant for myself heirs and assigns give unto the said Proprietors of Ridgfield their heirs and assigns all full power and authority to enter upon possess and enjoy the same ; and to convert and improve it, to what end and use soever they please by virtue of these presents. In Testimony whereof I do bind myself heirs and

assigns, set to my hand and seal this thirtieth day of January anno Dominis 1716<sup>17</sup>

“ DANIEL SHERWOOD [SEAL]

“ In presence of us  
JOSEPH PLATT  
EBENEZER BARNUM

“ Ridgfield Jan<sup>r</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> 1716<sup>17</sup> Personally Appeared Daniel Sherwood y<sup>e</sup> subscriber to this instrument and did acknowledge it for to be his free act and deed before me

“ JOSEPH PLATT, *Justice*

“ Received to Record and Recorded }  
Jany 30<sup>th</sup> 1716<sup>17</sup> per me }  
“ THOMAS HAULEY *Register.*”

Mr. Daniel Sherwood erected his mill as designated on the outlet of Mamanasco Lake, and was appropriated a home lot immediately north of Mr. Benjamin Burt's.

This completed the number of the original twenty-nine proprietors of the town.

## CHAPTER III.

### FURTHER PURCHASES FROM THE INDIANS.

ON the 18th of March, 1715, the proprietors made a second purchase of lands from the Indians, as the following deed will show :

*“ Know all men by these presents* that I Tackora alias Oreneca, indian, one of the native proprietors and owners of these tracts of unpurchased lands Lying above Ridgefield in y<sup>e</sup> County of Fairfield and Colony of Connecticut in New England for and in consideration of four pounds Current money of y<sup>e</sup> Colony of Connecticut to me in hand paid, or secured to be paid by y<sup>e</sup> proprietors of the Town of Ridgfield in the County and Colony aforesaid viz M<sup>r</sup> Richard Osburn Samuel Saint John Benjamin Wilson Thomas Smith Thomas Hauley Jonah Keeler, Timothy Keeler Nor<sup>k</sup> Samuel Smith Daniel Olmsted, Jonathan Rockwell Benjamin Hayt Henry Whitne Joseph Northrup Mill<sup>d</sup> Samuel Smith Joshua Lobdell Moses Northrup Benjamin Benedick, Richard Olmsted, Ebenezer Smith James Wallace Daniel Sherwood, Benjamin Burt David Scott John Sturdevant Joseph Platt Milford Thomas Hyatt y<sup>e</sup> Heirs of Thomas Rockwell deceased Matthew Saint John Matthias Saint John Joseph Keeler Matthew Seamer Daniel Arrus James Benedict Joseph Benedict James Northrup Joseph Crampton and Jonathan Wood, Have and do by these presents freely crearly and absolutely Grant Sell and Confirm unto the above named proprietors of the Town of Ridgefield and their heirs and assigns for ever a certain tract or parcel of Land belonging unto me y<sup>e</sup> said Oreneca Lying Situate being bounded as followeth viz beginning at a White Wood tree standing about four rods west of y<sup>e</sup> Mill and stands on the north side of the outlett running out of Mamasquogg pond on which the Mill now stands and from thence running by y<sup>e</sup> said Outlett till we come to a small Elm Staddle marked on each side and standing on the East side of y<sup>e</sup> Mill outlett, and from thence over Titicus to a butternutt tree, and from thence under the Mountain as tis bounded by marked trees till we come to a black Oak tree marked on each side, thence Elbowing till we come to a marked Bass tree Lying by a brook,



near the lower end of Mopoas Ridge, thence immediately across y<sup>e</sup> brook to a black Oak tree a little below the Lower End of Mopoos Ridge, thence over Titicus near a Northwest line as tis bounded by trees, to a small black Oak Staddle standing by a small brook, running out of the West hills, thence Directly over the brook near a southwest line to a white Oak tree under y<sup>e</sup> mountain with stones laid about the same which is a corner boundary<sup>d</sup> and from hence a South or South East line as tis bounded to a Small Walnut Staddle standing on a heap of rocks, thence something South East down towards y<sup>e</sup> pond ; thence something Eastward between the mountain and Mamanasquogg pond to the lower end thereof, over a small run then named punch Brook, thence about fourty rods South East to a white Oak tree marked and stones Lay'd about the same which was the lower corner meeting with the Old Purchase, all which quantity or parcel of Land, I the said Oreneca Have Sold and Confirmed unto y<sup>e</sup> above named proprietors their heirs and assigns for ever to enjoy y<sup>e</sup> same in quantity and quality, according to each mans interest or propriety of Lands in Ridgfield, immediately before the purchase hereof i.e. a half right man shall have but half so good an interest in the bargained premises as a whole right man shall, (the said James Wallace excepted To Have and to Hold unto them y<sup>e</sup> said proprietors their heirs and assigns for ever, y<sup>e</sup> said bargained premises with all the priviledges and Appurtenances thereunto belonging, to the only use benefit and behoof of the said proprietors their heirs and assigns for ever, without any Let Claim or molestation from me the said Orreneca, alias Tackora or my heirs Executors administrators or assigns for ever, or from any person or persons, Indian or English or any other by from or under me or them whatsoever Laying and Demand Challenge or Claim thereunto and I the above named Oreneca do bind myself my heirs Executors and administrators firmly by these presents to free and exonerate all the above bargained premises from any former and other Grants, bargains mortgages or any other incumbrances Whatsoever. In Witness whereof I the said Oreneca have hereunto Set my hand and Seal this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March anno Domini 1715.

*his*  
 “ORENECA × *alias* TACKORA.  
*mark*

“ Signed sealed and delivered

in presence of us

ELIPHALET LOCKWOOD

JOSEPH PLATT

OCOMOYWA × *mark*

*Consent.”*

“ Norwalk within the County of Fairfield March 18th day anno Domini 1715, Personally appeared Tackora, alias Oreneca, indian the subscriber to this instrument and did acknowledge it to be his free act and deed before me.

“ JOSEPH PLATT, *Justice Peace.*

“ Received to Record April 1715 and recorded by me.

“ THOMAS HAWLEY, *Register.*”

Again, on the 22d day of November, 1721, a third purchase was made.. The following is the deed :

“ *Know all men by these Presents*, that I Tackore, otherwise Called Norreneca Indian do for and in consideration of the Sum of Six Pounds in Money to me in hand paid or secured to be paid by the Proprietors of Ridgefield, whose names hereafter follows viz Thomas Hawley, Richard Osburn, Samuel Saint John Benjamin Benedict Benjamin Burt Benjamin Stebbins Ebenezer Smith Thomas Smith, Richard Olmsted Joshua Lobdell Milford Samuel Smith Nathan Saint John Henry Whitney Jonathan Rockwell Benjamin Hayt, Now<sup>k</sup> Samuel Smith, Daniel Olmstead, Timothy Keeler, Jonah Keeler, Matthew Seamore, Moses Northrup, Jonathan Abbott, Alexander Resseguie Jonathan Wood, Joseph Benedict James Benedict, James Northrup Joseph Northrup, Joseph Keeler, Matthew St John, Thomas Rockwells Heirs, Benjamin Wilson, Thomas Hyatt, John Sturdevant Heirs, Joseph Platt, Gideon Platt, Henry Dwight, David Scott, James Scott Daniel Sherwood, Do Give Grant bargain Sell and by these presents have given Granted Bargained Sold and fully confirmed unto the aforesaid Proprietors viz Thomas Hawley Richard Osborn Samuel Saint John Benjamin Burt Benjamin Benedict with all the rest before named and to their heirs and assigns for ever, a certain parcel or tract of Land lying within y<sup>e</sup> Pattend bounds and supposed Township of said Ridgefield lying and Described as follows viz Beginning upon y<sup>e</sup> north side of the Brook at the South End of Titicus or Tomspring mountain (so called) at a great Tree marked in the Old purchase line. Thence South West to the South End of y<sup>e</sup> long swamp marking trees, Thence to the East side of Round pond, and by said Pond to the North West side of it. Thence Norwest acrost the Hills to a brook running into the east end of the Long Pond marking Trees from thence a direct course over the brook to a Hemlock tree standing on Titicus River by the Sand Bank near a brook running into Titicus on the West side of said Tree which tree is thus marked B and thence as the river runs to said Tackore<sup>s</sup> Old House to a white Oak Tree marked near a horse



pound, thence crossing the River to a Tree marked just on the River Thence across y<sup>e</sup> south end of Moppos Ridge to a great White Oak tree standing at the northermost part of a swamp thence crossing the end of the swamp to another marked tree crossing the end of a plain Ridge of Land over Moppos brook comeing from the north to a white Oak tree marked standing on y<sup>e</sup> East side of a brook by the bank.

“Thence easterly to the range of Asproom Mountain and southerly down under the mountain to the head of Mamanasco hill to a white Oak tree standing on the East side of the River near the Watering place. Thence under Asproom mountain at the foot thereof to Copps Mountain and down to the Old line and by said line Westerly to the Mill at the old boundary, and from thence to the first mentioned place in the boundaries in computing their former purchased called the New purchase.

“To Have and To Hold said Granted and bargained premises with all the priviledges and appurtenances to the same belonging or in any wise appertaining I Norreneca say I have sold and fully made over y<sup>e</sup> same unto the said Thomas Hawley Richard Osborn Samuel Saint John &c with the above named proprietors and to their heirs and assigns for ever, who shall and may for ever hereafter by virtue hereof Enter upon possess and Enjoy y<sup>e</sup> same Convey Convert alienate and improve the same according to their Several Interests in what way and manner, to what use and end soever, they the above named proprietors their heirs and assigns shall find convenient. Furthermore I the said Norreneca do hereby Covenant and Engage to Warrant and Defend y<sup>e</sup> same for ever to y<sup>e</sup> above said proprietors, their heirs and assigns from me my heirs Executors or Administrators or any Indian or Indians, whatsoever Laying any Lawfull Claim or Challenge thereunto. In Testimony Whereof I do hereunto Set my hand and Seal this 22<sup>d</sup> day of November Anno Domini 1721.

*his*  
“NORRENEKE × Indian. [SEAL.]  
*mark.*

“Signed Sealed and Delivered  
in presence of us

BENJAMIN STEBBINS

TIMOTHY CANFIELD

“On the 22<sup>d</sup> of November anno Domini 1721 Norreneca indian personally appeared and acknowledged the above written Instrument to be his free act and deed before me.

“RICHARD OSBORN *Justice.*”

“Received to Record November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1721 and recorded pr me

“THOMAS HAWLEY *Register.*”

On the 4th of July, 1727, a fourth purchase was made. The following is the deed:

*“ Know all men by these presents That We Japorneck & Moses, Indians belonging to Wepack or long pond so Called & Richard and Samm Indians belonging to ammauogg do For and in Consideration of eighteen pounds in money or goods Equivalent, two guns, Eighteen Shillings in hand received, and Three bottles of Rhum, paid by y<sup>e</sup> propriet<sup>r</sup> of Ridgefield, Whose Names hereafter Follow, Viz, Thomas Hauley, Richard Osburn, Sam<sup>l</sup> Saintjohn, Benjamin Benedict, Benjamin Burt, Benjamin Stebbins Ebenezer Smith, Thomas Smith, Richard Olmsted Joshua Lobdell, Milf Sam<sup>l</sup> Smith, Nathan Saintjohn, Henry Whitne, Jonath<sup>n</sup> Rockwell, Benjamin Hayt, Jonathan Abbott Sen<sup>r</sup>, Allexand<sup>r</sup> Resseguie, Titus Wood, Joseph Benedick, James Benedict, James Northrup, Joseph Northrup Joseph Lee, Joseph Keeler, Benjamin Heacock Benjamin Wilson, Thomas Hyatt, John Sturdevants heirs, Joseph Platt, Gideon Platt, David Scott, James Scott, Dan<sup>l</sup> Sherwood, Norw Sam<sup>l</sup> Smith, Daniel Olmsted, Timothy Keeler, Jonah Keeler, Matthew Seamore, Joseph Hobart, Moses Northrup, Give, Grant bargain Sell, and by these presents do freely fully, and absolutely Sell Convey and Confirm unto y<sup>e</sup> said Proprieto<sup>s</sup> above named, according to their Sevor<sup>l</sup> interests in the Proprietyship of Ridgefield, a Certain tract, or parcell of land hereafter described, and mentioned, Namely, all y<sup>e</sup> lands included within y<sup>e</sup> lines hereafter mentioned, beginning at a large White Oak tree mark’t, Standing about twenty miles three hundred and five rodts from Cortlands point the line agreed upon by the Commission and from thence a line Southerly parrallell to y<sup>e</sup> line Call’d twenty miles from Hudson River, till it meet y<sup>e</sup> former purchase made by Cottoona : and again from y<sup>e</sup> fore mentioned white Oak Tree a line Northerly parrallel also to said Twenty mile line till it meet y<sup>e</sup> purchase made of Tackore, Comprehending all y<sup>e</sup> land, Eastward of said lines, till it come to y<sup>e</sup> old purchase lines, to have and to hold y<sup>e</sup> said Granted and bargained premises with all y<sup>e</sup> privelidges and Commodities to the same belonging, or in any wise appertaining, We said indians have sold and fully made over y<sup>e</sup> same unto y<sup>e</sup> above Named Proprietors and to their heirs and assigns forever, in such proportion as above, according to their sever<sup>l</sup> interests to them and theirs, Sole and proper use and benefitt, who shall and may forever hereafter by virtue hereof enter upon, posess and enjoy y<sup>e</sup> same, Convey, Convert, alienate and improve it in what way and manner, to what use and soever, they the above named proprieto<sup>s</sup> their heirs and assigns Shall See Convenient.*

“Furthermore we the said Japorneck, Richard Moses and Samm, indians, do for ourselves and heirs hereby Covenant and Engage to warrant and defend y<sup>e</sup> same forever unto y<sup>e</sup> Proprieto<sup>s</sup> of Ridgefield aforsaid and to their heirs and assigns forever, from us and our heirs or any persons what forever, whether English or indians laying any lawfull claim Challenge or demand thereunto.

“In Testimony whereof we do hereunto set our hands and Seals this 4<sup>th</sup> day of July Anno Domini 1727.

JAPORNECK, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

RICHARD, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

MOSES, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

SAM, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

WETT HAMS, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

AMMON, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

“Signed Sealed and delivered

In presence of us

JOHN BOLT, *his × mark.*

PETER RANDALL.

“July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1727 then appeared y<sup>e</sup> persons of Japorneck Moses, Richard, Sam, Wett Hams, and Ammon Indians, and did acknowledge the above written Instrument to be their free act and deed. Before me

“RICHARD OSBURN *Just.*

“Received to record July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1727 and recorded pr me

“THOMAS HAULEY *Register.*”

Two other purchases were made in the year 1729, the first on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, the second on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April. Below are the deeds :

“*Know all men by these presents* that we Japporneck, Ammon and Wett hams, Samm Moses, Pawguenongi and Crow all indians belonging to long pond or Wepack for and in Consideration of a valuable reward paid or to be paid by y<sup>e</sup> Proprietors of Ridgefield Have Given, Granted, bargained Sold and by these presents do freely fully and absolutely Sell, Convey, and Confirm unto y<sup>e</sup> proprietors of Ridgefield their heirs and assigns forever, according unto their several interests or proprieties a Certain Tract or parcell of land Supposedly in y<sup>e</sup> Township of Ridgefield Lying Situate and Butted and bounded as Followeth, Namely, Beginning West at an Oak Staddle standing on y<sup>e</sup> west side of y<sup>e</sup> Outlett of long pond about six rods west of said Outlett, Near y<sup>e</sup>

lower fishing place, from thence Southward along y<sup>e</sup> line which Mr Lewis run, and down to y<sup>e</sup> old purchase line ; and from said Staddle Northward by said Line of Mr Lewis To Titicus river, and bounded East by y<sup>e</sup> former purchase made of Japporneck and by y<sup>e</sup> purchase made of Tackora being in breadth, about three hundred and five rods.

“ To Have and To Hold said Granted and bargained premises with all y<sup>e</sup> liberties and priviledges to y<sup>e</sup> same belonging or in any wise appertaining.

“ We say we have sold and fully made over y<sup>e</sup> same unto y<sup>e</sup> said proprieto<sup>s</sup> of Ridgefield according to their proportionable interests and proprieties as above, and to their heirs and assigns forever, who shall and may forever hereafter by virtue hereof, Enter upon posess and Enjoy y<sup>e</sup> same Convey Convert alienate and improve it, in what way and manner, to what use and end forever they the said proprietors their heirs, or assigns shall See Convenient.

“ Furthermore We the said Japporneck Ammon and Wett Hams, Moses, Samm Pawquenongi and Crow do for ourselves heirs, and assigns, hereby Covenant and Engage to warrent and defend y<sup>e</sup> above Granted, and bargained premises unto y<sup>e</sup> said proprietors, their heirs and assigns, from us Our heirs, Executors, administrators, or any manner of person or persons what forever, English or indians laying any manner of Claim Challenge or demand thereunto from by, or under us, or Ours. In Testimony whereof we do hereunto set our hands and Seals this 7<sup>th</sup> day of March Anno Domini 1729.

JAPORNECK, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

MOSES, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

SAMM, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

AMMON, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

WETT HAMS, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

PAWQUENONGI, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

CROW, *his × mark.* [SEAL.]

“ Signed Sealed and Delivered  
In presence of us

JOSIAH GILBERT,

WILLIAM DRINKWATER.

“ March y<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 1729 then appeared personally y<sup>e</sup> Subscribers Namely Japporneck, Moses Samm Ammon, Wett Hams, Pawquenongi, Crow and did acknowledge y<sup>e</sup> above written Instrument to be their free act and deed, Before me

“ RICHARD OSBURN *Justice.*

“ Received to record March 7<sup>th</sup> 1729 and recorded pr me

“ THO<sup>s</sup> HAWLEY *Regist<sup>r</sup>.*”



“ *Know all men by these presents*, that we Ahtopeer Moheus Neshucawpo Tawquantose Wawsachim all Indians belonging unto Hooppacks, and Jacob Turkey Indian belonging to Narrahawtong. For and in consideration of a valluable Sum or reward paid by the proprietors of Ridgefield which is to our full satisfaction, have given Granted bargained Sold, and by these presents do freely fully and absolutely Sell Convey and confirm unto said proprietors their heirs and assigns forever according to their several interests the following Tract or parcell of Land—viz Beginning at Danbury South West Corner Continueing Our patten line till it meets y<sup>e</sup> 20 mile line between the Government, and then Southwardly by said 20 mile line, till it cross Titicus River and thence Eastwardly to Danbury South West Corner, Bounded all along Southerly by our former purchase.

“ To Have and To Hold said granted and bargained premises with all the priviliges and appurtenances to y<sup>e</sup> same belonging or in any wise appertaining we say we have sold, and fully made over the same unto y<sup>e</sup> said proprietors and to their heirs and assigns forever, in proportion to their several interests, who shall and may forever hereafter by virtue hereof enter upon possess and enjoy the same, Convey Convert alienate and improve it in what way and manner, to what use and end soever, they y<sup>e</sup> said proprietors their heirs and assigns shall see Convenient.

“ Furthermore we the indians above named do for ourselves and heirs hereby Covenant and engage to Warrant and Defend the same forever unto the proprietors of Ridgfield as above from us Our heirs or successors or any manner of person whatever English or Indians lawing any lawfull claim Challenge or Demand thereunto.

“ In Testimony whereof we the above named Indians do hereunto Set Our Hands and Seals this 10<sup>th</sup> day of Aprill Anno Domini 1729.

AH TOPPEER, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

MOKENS, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

JACOB TURKEY, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

NESHUCAWPO, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

TAUQUATOOSE, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

WAW SACHIM, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

Two boys { WAW CALL, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

{ CAPT JACOB, *his* × *mark*. [SEAL.]

“ Signed Sealed and delivered  
in presence of us

ISRAEL MEAD

CALEB STRONG

MOSES indian *his* × *mark*.

CROW, *his* × *mark*.

Two other purchases were subsequently made of the Indians: one on the 28th of February, 1738, and the other on the 6th of December, 1734; but they were of lands lying within the limits of the State of New York, on the Oblong; and although the deeds are recorded on our town records, they are not deemed of sufficient interest to be given a place here.

The eighth and last purchase of lands by the proprietors of the Indians was made on the 19th of December, 1739. The following is the deed then given:

*“ Know all men by these presents that we Betty y<sup>e</sup> mother of Jacob Turkey, Capt Jacob Turkey Mokquaroose, for and in consideration of y<sup>e</sup> sum of six pounds five shillings money to us in hand paid, or secured to be paid by Lt Eben<sup>r</sup> Smith, Capt Daniel Olmsted, & Matthew Seamore of Ridgefield in y<sup>e</sup> County of Fairfield and Colony of Connecticut in New England and which is to our full Satisfaction, Do Give Grant Bargain Sell and by these presents Have Given Granted, Bargained Sold and fully confirm unto y<sup>e</sup> above S<sup>d</sup> Let Eben<sup>r</sup> Smith Capt Daniel Olmsted & Matthew Seamore and their associates, and to their heirs & assigns forever a certain parcell or tract of Lands Lying within y<sup>e</sup> new Pattent Bounds Called in y<sup>e</sup> Township of Ridgefield, as it is Butted & Bounded on y<sup>e</sup> east by Danbury Township, north by New Fairfield, on y<sup>e</sup> west by y<sup>e</sup> Government Line Southerly by Our former Purchase made of Jacob Turkey. To Have, and to Hold said Granted & Bargained premises with all y<sup>e</sup> priviledges & appurtenances to y<sup>e</sup> Same belonging or in any wise appertaining, We y<sup>e</sup> said Betty, Jacob Turkey, Mokquaroose, say we have sold and Fully made over y<sup>e</sup> same unto y<sup>e</sup> said Lt Eben<sup>r</sup> Smith Capt Dan<sup>l</sup> Olmsted and Matthew Seamore, their Associates, and their heirs and assigns for Ever, who shall and may for Ever hereafter, by virtue hereof Enter upon Possess and Enjoy y<sup>e</sup> Same Convey, Convert, Alionate, and improve y<sup>e</sup> Same according to their Severall interests, in what way, and manner to what use & end So Ever they y<sup>e</sup> above named Lt Eben<sup>r</sup> Smith, Capt Daniel Olmsted, and Matthew Seamore, their Associates, or their heirs and assigns Shall See Convenient.*

Furthermore we y<sup>e</sup> said Betty, Jacob, Turkey, Mokquaroose, Defend y<sup>e</sup> same for ever to y<sup>e</sup> abovesaid Lt Eben<sup>r</sup> Smith, Capt Dan<sup>l</sup> Olmsted, & Matthew Seamore their associates heirs and assigns from us, our

heirs Execut<sup>rs</sup> administrat<sup>rs</sup>, or any Indian or Indians Whatsoever, or any manner of persons, Laying any Lawfull Claim Challenge, or Demand thereunto. - In Testimony whereof we do hereunto Set our hands & Seals this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December A.D. 1739.

“ BETTY, *her x mark.*

This deed was also signed by other Indians, whose names and marks are fully recorded on our town records.



## CHAPTER IV.

### COLONIAL HISTORY.

As soon as the original twenty-nine families had actually located in the town, its permanency was effectually established. Other families began at once to come in and purchase lands, and erect dwellings, and shops, and stores. Indeed, it rapidly put on the appearance of a growing settlement. Roads were surveyed, and other sections of land.

A place for religious meetings was fitted up, then a church built, and a town house erected. But still the town was poor. A constant outlay was made necessary, while every anticipated source of income was not as yet realized. The land was not in a condition to yield much, nor a convenient market found for what could be produced. The inhabitants were compelled to practice the strictest economy. They traded and bartered among themselves. Toll was taken for the grain that was ground, linen fabrics were produced and exchanged for cotton cloths, and their minister paid in wheat, rye, and Indian corn.

The distaff and the spindle in-doors kept time with the axe and the hoe out of doors.

King Solomon could have found here many a virtuous woman, even though her price is above rubies. His description of her, so graphically portrayed in the book of Proverbs, was answered to the very letter in many a housewife. It would almost seem as if he had looked

with a prophetic eye to our growing village, three thousand years in the future, when he wrote :

“ She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

“ She is like the merchants’ ships ; she bringeth her food from afar.

“ She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

“ She considereth a field, and buyeth it : with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

“ She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

“ She perceiveth that her merchandise is good : her candle goeth not out by night.

“ She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

“ She stretcheth out her hand to the poor ; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

“ She is not afraid of the snow for her household : for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

“ She maketh herself coverings of tapestry ; her clothing is silk and purple.

“ Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

“ She maketh fine linen, and selleth it ; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

“ Strength and honor are her clothing ; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

“ She openeth her mouth with wisdom ; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

“ She looketh well to the ways of her household, and cateth not the bread of idleness.

“ Her children arise up, and call her blessed ; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”

The experience of these early settlers was that of all young colonists ; through a series of years they were placed in circumstances well calculated to develop every latent energy of mind and heart.

Six days they labored and did all their work, and the seventh they gave to God. They were emphatically “ Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

And this is but as we should suppose it would have been, when we reflect that they were in part composed of the direct descendants of the Puritan fathers, and in part of the Huguenots.

The love of religious liberty was still warm in their hearts, and the hopes which a new country enkindled made heavy burdens light and hard yokes easy.

They went to their tasks as men who had had consciously laid upon them the possibility of a glorious destiny which they were bound to achieve. Toil and privation did not intimidate them, nor their slow headway against existing difficulties discourage them. The rugged soil, which at first had greeted them with “ stony” indifference, was at length tickled into good-humor, and made to smile upon their efforts.

The deep tangled forest gradually gave way to grain fields and orchards ; the plough followed close upon the axe, and the sickle kept close to the plough.

There was a sweetness and richness about the corn which the sweat of their brows had given it, and a flavor to their fruit which only they can detect who have planted the seed, and carefully watched and nursed it through every stage of its development.

Among the early settlers, there were no Rothschilds nor Astors, nor any retired merchants living upon their wealth.

They were all men of moderate means. They were rich in enterprise and energy and patience and physical and moral strength, but poor in the currency of the country.

Therefore, when the following act was passed by the General Assembly, in May, 1725, we are not at all surprised to find them petitioning that they be exempted from taxation:

“ The towns of Ashford, Hebron, Ridgefield, New Town, and New Milford shall proceed to take and make a list of all the polls and ratable estate by their listers, this present year, as other towns in this colony do. And if either of the said towns are destitute of listers as the law directs, to do the work, that then in such case, such town so destitute, shall sometime in the month of June next meet together and choose a suitable number of their inhabitants—to be listers, who shall be sworn to that office accordingly : who shall take the said list and transmit the same to this Assembly to be holden at New Haven in October next.”

The reason for this action on the part of the town was not owing to any unwillingness on their part to pay their allotted taxes, but an inability to do so.

The lack was not in the *will*, but in the *pocket*.

Besides, they were just about to undertake to build a church, in which to worship, and to do so was to place upon their shoulders a burden under which they almost staggered.

That their petition was deemed reasonable and readily granted is proven by the following act of General Assembly :

“ Upon consideration of the petition of the inhabitants of the town of Ridgefield :

“ This Assembly grants them an exemption for two years from publick taxes : provided they draw no money out of the treasury for the schools, nor send any representatives to attend this Assembly during such exemption.”

At the expiration of the two years, they find it necessary to ask for a repetition of the same clemency on the part of General Assembly. This was also granted, as the following will show :

“ Upon the memorial of the town of Ridgefield, Resolved by this Assembly, that the said town shall be exempted, and the same is hereby exempted from paying publick taxes for the term of two years next to come.”

After the expiration of the time above named, the town seems to have appointed listers and paid their allotted taxes, but we find in 1740 that, either owing to delinquency in such payment or actual neglect, this town with Litchfield is censured and fined by General Assembly. There is, however, a single redeeming feature in the case, viz., the very respectable company in which the town is found.

This act of General Assembly, May 8th, 1740, reads as follows :

“ Forasmuch as by one law of this colony entitled, An Act directing listers in their duty and office, it is provided that, if the listers in the respective towns in this Colony, shall not annually send the sum total of the list of the polls, and ratable estates of the inhabitants of such towns, to this Assembly, at their sessions in October, such town shall be doomed by this Assembly ; And whereas the listers of the towns of Ridgefield and Litchfield, respectively, have not sent the sum total of such list of the polls and ratable estate in their respective towns to the sessions of this Assembly in October last, according as it is in said act provided, This Assembly do sentence and doom the inhabitants of the town of Ridgefield to pay into the publick treasury of this Colony the sum of twenty-nine pounds, fifteen shillings, and the inhabitants of the town of Litchfield the sum of twenty-seven pounds, six shillings, and four pence : and the Treasurer is ordered and directed to send



forth his warrant to the constables of the said towns, respectively, to levy and collect the said sums of the inhabitants of the towns to which they belong, and to pay in the same to the publick treasury ; and the said constables are hereby impowered, respectively, to levy the said sums of the inhabitants, and required to pay in the same to the publick treasury, as is by law required in cases where the lists are orderly returned to this Assembly."

Going back to the year 1727, we find the inhabitants of the town considerably exercised over the proposed change in the western boundary line of the State, between it and New York. It was proposed to give the State of New York sixty-two thousand acres of land along its north and south boundaries in exchange for Greenwich, and a part of Stamford on the Sound.

They desired a more extended shore line, and for this were willing to make the above appropriation. But by so doing, Ridgefield would lose so much territory as to materially weaken the township. Therefore its proprietors began at once to cast about to know what they should be able to do, provided the proposed change should be actually made.

Above them, lying between the northern limits of the town and Danbury, was a gusset or wedge of land not as yet appropriated, and for this they at once petitioned General Assembly.

The first petition was presented in 1727, while yet the loss was in prospect only.

" At a General Assembly Holden At Hartford in His Majesties Colony of Connecticott in New England on the 11<sup>th</sup> Day of May, in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George of Great Britain &c King Annoque Dom 1727.

" Upon the memorial of the proprietors, inhabitants of the town of Ridgefield, shewing to this Assembly, that they are likely to suffer great loss, and damage, by reason of part of their townships being cut off by the dividing line between New York, and Connecticutt gov-



ernments, and praying that a small tract or gusset of country land lying northward of said Ridgefield, westward of Danbury, and eastward of the said line where it shall be when run, may be granted to them as an equivalent for the loss and damage abovesaid :

“ This Assembly do defer giving any answer thereto, till the said dividing line shall be ascertained, and in the mean while, do prohibit the taking any part of those lands, on the account of any grants made by this Court to any persons, whatsoever, without the special order of this Assembly : Whereupon, this Assembly do hereby strictly prohibit and forbid all surveyours, or other officers, whatsoever, from surveying and laying out any grant, or grants on any part of the said lands, without the special order of this Assembly, until the said line be ascertained as aforesaid.”

The terms of exchange were finally agreed upon by the two Colonies, and the second petition from the town submitted to General Assembly, with satisfactory results, as the following will show :

“ At a General Assembly Holden at Hartford on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> day of May 1731

“ Upon the memorial of Joseph Keeler, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Olmstead, and the rest of the proprietors of the common and undivided lands in the town of Ridgefield, setting forth to this Assembly, the great loss and damage they have sustained by reason of the dividend line, between the Province of New York, and the Colony of Connecticut coming so much further eastward, than was expected, and thereby cutting off a considerable quantity of the land belonging to said town, thereupon petition this Assembly, that they would, in consideration of the loss, which they have sustained as aforesaid, grant unto them, a certain quantity of land, bounded South by Ridgefield, east by Danbury, north with New Fairfield, west by the Colony line : Upon which, this Assembly grants unto the said Joseph Keeler, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Olmstead, and the rest of the proprietors of the common and undivided land in said Ridgefield, and do hereby grant and confirm unto them said quantity of land, in that proportion, according to their present interest in the common and undivided lands in said town, excepting all those grants that have been taken up within the limits aforesaid ; and likewise grant that they take out a patent for the same, signed by the Governour and Secretary.”

The patent which was given in the same year reads as follows :

*" Know all Men by these presents* that We y<sup>e</sup> Governor and Company of His Majesties English Colony of Connecticut in New England. In General Court assembled In pursuance and by Virtue of the Power granted unto us, by our late Sovereign Lord King Charles y<sup>e</sup> Second of Blessed memory in and by His Majesties Letters Patent under the Great Seal of England, Bearing date the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April in the 14 Year of his Reign, Have Given, Granted, and by these presents for us and our Successors, do give, grant, ratify and confirm unto Joseph Keeler, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Olmsted and the rest of the Proprietors of the common and undivided land in the Town of Ridgfield, in that proportion, according to their present Interest in said common and undivided land in y<sup>e</sup> Town aforesaid to them, and each of them, their heirs and assigns forever, and in particular all One Tract-peece or Parcel of Land, Butted and Bounded as Followeth—That is to say, On the South, by Ridgfield Township, On the East by Danbury, On the North by New-Fairfield, On the West by the Colony Line, together with all woods, Timber underwood, uplands, arable Lands, Meadows pastures, ponds, Waters, Rivers, Brooks, Islands Fishings, Fowlings, Huntings, Mines, Minerals, Quarries, and precious Stones upon or within y<sup>e</sup> said Tract of Land so Butted and Bounded as is herein before exprest or Mentioned, Excepting all those Grants that have been Made and taken up within the said Tract of Land and with the Rights, Members, Hereditaments, and appurtenances, and y<sup>e</sup> re-vission and revisions, remainder and remainders, rights Royalties and privileges Whatsoever of, into, with in, or out of y<sup>e</sup> premises and every part and parcel thereof, Excepting as above Excepted ; and the said Tract of Land above mentioned, with all the appurtenances, privileges, immunities, and Franchises there unto belonging, shall forever hereafter be deemed, reputed, and accounted, a good, pure, absolute and indefeasible Estate of inheritances in Fee Simple, of, and unto the said Joseph Keeler Ebenezer Smith Daniel Olmstead and the rest of the Proprietors of the Common and undivided Land in said Town of Ridgfield, in such proportion, according to their present interest in said Common and undivided land to them, their heirs, and assigns for ever. To have and to Hold, inherit and enjoy y<sup>e</sup> said land and premises, Hereditaments, and appurtenances with the privileges, immunities, and Franchise, herein mentioned as their interest and property for ever, and to be to y<sup>e</sup> only use, Benefit, and Behoof of the

said Joseph Keeler Ebenezer Smith Daniel Olmsted and the rest of the Proprietors of the common and undivided Land in the Town of Ridgefield aforesaid, to them their heirs and assigns forever—To hold of His Majesty, His heirs and successors according to the Tenour of his Majestie's Manor of East Greenwich, in the County of Kent, in the Kingdom of England, in free and common Soccage, and not in Capitee or Knight Service, Yealding and paying therefor, unto our Lord & King, his Heirs and Successors forever, Only the fifth part of all the Gold or Silver which from time to time, and at all times hereafter, shall be there gotten, Or obtained in Lieu of all service, Duties and demands Whatsoever according to Charter. In Witness Whereof, we have caused the Seal of the said Colony to be hereunto affixed this first day of June AD 1731, and in the fourth Year of y<sup>e</sup> Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second King &c.

“By Order of the Governor and Company of his Majesties English Colony of Connecticut in New England, in America.

“HEZ: WYLLYS *Secretary*.

“J. TALCOTT *Governor*.”

“June 1<sup>st</sup> 1731, Received and Entered upon the Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Lib 5 fol 248-9.

“Per HEZ: WYLLYS *Secretary*.”

“Received to Record and Recorded this 8<sup>th</sup> day of June AD 1731.

“Per Me, THOMAS HAULEY *Register*.”

“At a General Assembly Holden At Hartford in His Majesties English Colony of Connecticut in New England in America, on Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup> Day of May, Anno Regni Regis Georgii 2<sup>d</sup>, Magnæ Britanniae &c., 5<sup>to</sup> Annoque Dom 1732.

“Whereas this Assembly in May last, granted unto Joseph Keeler, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Olmstead, and the rest of the proprietors of Ridgefield in the county of Fairfield, a certain tract of land bounded south by said Ridgefield, East by Danbury, north by New Fairfield, west by the Colony line, which tract of land this Assembly do now annex to the town of Ridgefield, and to be taken and accounted a part thereof.”

In the year 1728 the town of Ridgefield was included in the Probate district of Stamford.

In 1746 it was transferred from Stamford to the Probate district of Danbury.

It was not until 1841 that Ridgefield became a distinct Probate district.

The following minutes from the records show that at an early day the town was interested in establishing a military company, and applied to General Assembly to have its nominations approved :

*“ The General Assembly in session at Hartford, A.D. 1727.*

*“ This Assembly do establish and confirm Mr. Samuel St John of Ridgefield to (be) Captain of the company of trainband in the town of Ridgefield aforesaid, and order that he be commissioned accordingly.”*

*“ This Assembly do establish and confirm Mr. Benjamin Benedict of Ridgefield to (be) Lieutenant of the company or trainband in the town of Ridgefield aforesaid, and order that he be commissioned accordingly.”*

*“ In 1732 General Assembly, then in session at New Haven did establish and confirm Mr. Benjamin Benedict to be captain of the company or trainband in the town of Ridgefield, and Mr. James Benedict, Lieutenant and Mr. Daniel Olmstead, Ensign.*

*“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield March 14<sup>th</sup> 1735, Whereas by a Special Warrent from Maj'r Burr y<sup>e</sup> Townsmen are directed Forthwith to procure y<sup>e</sup> Town stock of powder, Bullets, and Flints, according to law. We do therefore desire y<sup>e</sup> Townmen Speedily to procure y<sup>e</sup> same and do hereby oblige ourselves to Fulfill and answer such obligations, and pay such Debts as they Shall make in order thereto.*

*“ Test THOS. HAWLEY Regist'r.”*

As early as the year 1748 the Colonies were disturbed by the contentions between Great Britain and France, with reference to the actual boundaries of their respective possessions in America. It was the low, muttering thunder of the approaching storm, which burst in its fury upon the Colonies in 1754, and which is known in history as the French and Indian war.

We find this town participating in the struggle, with

the bravery and the liberality which have ever characterized it, contributing its full share, both of money and men.

At a general town meeting held on September 20th, 1748,

“ It was voted by a major vote that the powder and lead that was taken up by the Soldiers, that went for us, to guard the upper towns, the present year, should be paid in a town way, amounting to the sum of £6. old tenure.”

James Resseguie and Vivus Dauchy died in this war.

The burial-places of the town were selected and appropriated at an early day.

“ At a Proprietors Meeting held in Ridgefield, Jan. y<sup>e</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1735/6. By their major vote, Timothy Keeler was chosen Proprietor's Clerk, or Register for y<sup>e</sup> year ensuing, and sworn according to Law before James Benedict, Justice of y<sup>e</sup> peace” Jan. y<sup>e</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1735/6.

“ Att y<sup>e</sup> Meeting above s<sup>d</sup> the Proprietors by their Major Vote do grant, and by their order do appoint for y<sup>e</sup> town's use a certain Spot or piece of land for their burying place or yard ; s<sup>d</sup> spot or parcell of Land Lying a little Southward of that lott or homestead that Milford Sam'l Smith bought of Drinkwaters, and Northward of y<sup>e</sup> Cart-path or Rhode that comes over Titticus river.”

This is the old part of the present cemetery. Previous to this, the burying-ground used was situated immediately west of where Mr. William Edward Benedict now resides. Two stones are still to be seen : one a freestone, the other a common granite ; one marks the grave of Sarah, wife of Richard Osborn, Esq., and the other of Captain Matthew Benedict. Mrs. Osborn's is the oldest stone now standing in town.

The cemetery at Ridgebury was first appropriated for that purpose, December 17th, 1743, as the following action of the town will show :



“ The town by their major vote, do allow and order y<sup>e</sup> spot of land lying at y<sup>e</sup> North-east corner of Joseph Northrops home lot, in y<sup>e</sup> New Patent, shall be a burying place for y<sup>e</sup> people of y<sup>e</sup> New Patent to bury their dead therein.”

The reason for the meagreness of the library, now owned by the town, is found in the following vote passed at a town meeting April 10th, 1786 :

“ Voted, that the State Law-books belonging at present to this Town, shall be sold at public Vendue.”

It is much to be regretted that such action should ever have been taken by the town.

Had these books been allowed to remain and been carefully preserved, we should have had (together with later contributions) a very respectable town library, instead of the few books we now possess.

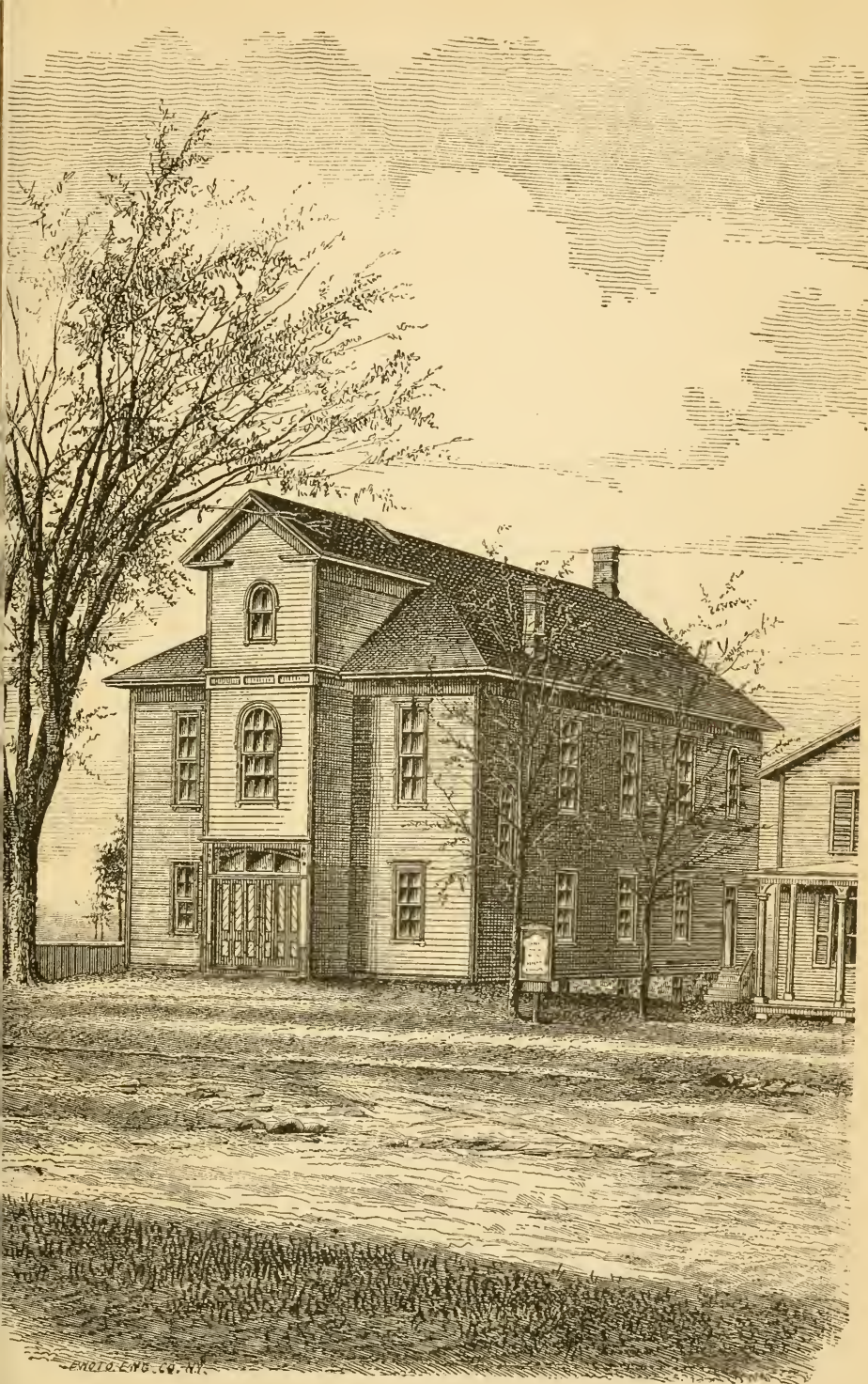
The first town-house was built in 1743, and stood in the south-west corner of Mrs. Irad Hawley's yard, immediately in front of the present Congregational Lecture-room. It was in the following year removed to a point “south of the Pound,” which was probably south of Mrs. Nathan Smith's present residence.

This continued to be used both as a school-house and a town-house until 1776, when the old house was given to the proprietors of the Independent School-house, to be used in finishing that house, “provided that the said Independent School-house shall be used for town and society meetings.”

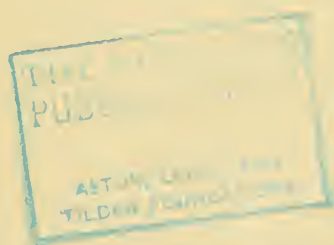
After the Independent School-house had been removed, the town had no regular place for its meetings, but made use of the churches.

It may be proper to state in this connection, although not properly a matter of colonial history, that in 1830 the town purchased the under part of the





TOWN HOUSE, ERECTED 1876.



Masonic Hall, which had previously been used for a store, and fitted it up for town meetings. This continued to be used until the erection of the present town-house, which was in 1876.

There is a striking contrast between the first and the last town-houses, as will be seen by reference to the following vote of the town passed December, 1743—the first cost £79 17s., the last about \$6000 :

“ The House, voted to be built for y<sup>e</sup> use of y<sup>e</sup> Town, is to be constructed in the manner following—viz—to be one Story high, 26 feet long, 18 feet wide, and a chimney at one end, quite across y<sup>e</sup> house—to be covered with good cedar shingles—3 feet long, if laid upon sawed lath—and if y<sup>e</sup> shingles be 18 inches or 2 feet—if laid on sawed boards—to be well closed with clapboards and door—two good floors,—to be well ceiled with white wood boards—with three Windows—one of the said windows to be on y<sup>e</sup> back side of y<sup>e</sup> house—20 in wide, and two feet long,—y<sup>e</sup> other two windows, each to have 3 feet and one half of glass,—and the casement to run into y<sup>e</sup> wall,—a good hearth—a well fastened bench raised within side of y<sup>e</sup> house—a good lock and key to y<sup>e</sup> door,—to be well underpined—y<sup>e</sup> jambs and y<sup>e</sup> top of y<sup>e</sup> chimney to be well painted—

“ The above said house, Gamaliel Northrop hath made an offer to build y<sup>e</sup> same, according to y<sup>e</sup> description above mentioned—for 79£ 17s old tenure, and to be finished by y<sup>e</sup> first day of December next—To being paid 50£ by y<sup>e</sup> first of April next, and y<sup>e</sup> said Gamaliel Northrop do promise.—In witness my hand, this 29 day of December 1743.

GAMALIEL NORTHROP.

“ In presence of  
TIMOTHY KEELER  
JOSEPH FOLLIOT.”

The first Pound in the village street was probably built on the church green, a little north of the first town-house. This Pound was in existence as early as 1727, when Joseph Lee was appointed key-keeper.

“ Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1753—at a Town Meeting, It was voted ‘ that there shall be a New Pound built in y<sup>e</sup> lane Northward of where David

Scott lives—and to be 30 ft. in length, and 25 feet in Breadth,—and to Consist or be built with 4 Sills, 4 Plates, and four new Posts, and Eight Braces—all of good Sound White oak timber, hewn Square and well framed together and to be 5 feet between y<sup>e</sup> sills and plates.”

This Pound was located near the present blacksmith-shop of Mr. James Walsh.

“Annual Town Meeting legally Warned and holden in Ridgefield on y<sup>e</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> day of December A.D. 1795. Voted, that a Pound be built y<sup>e</sup> South side the Rocks, in the Street, on y<sup>e</sup> west side the Path near Samuel Stebbins Dwelling House not to contain more ground in it, than is equal to Forty feet Square.”

This, the third Pound, was located in front, and a little to the south of Mr. William Lee's house; it occupied the exact ground on which General Arnold's horse was shot from under him.

The fourth Pound is the present one north of Mr. William Lee's house.



## CHAPTER V.

### REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY—TRYON'S INVASION.

THE coming on of the Revolutionary struggle was like the approach of every great crisis in the history of a nation. Men did not, at first, take in the grand proportions which it ultimately assumed. They did not discover in the growing dislike of taxation without representation the foundation of what would inevitably prove a partition wall between two distinct nations. Therefore, they were not prepared, at once, to occupy the independent position which they were finally forced to take.

We are consequently not disappointed to find that this town, with others, was slow to take the one step which should decide its future destiny; nor are we surprised that, having once reached this decision, it stood firm and unyielding through all the days of darkness which preceded the birth of constitutional liberty in America.

The following extracts from our town records are interesting as indicating these progressive steps :

“ *First.* Whereas application hath been made to the Select Men of the Town of Ridgefield in Connecticut Colony by several of the inhabitants of s<sup>d</sup> Town, to call a Special Town Meeting in order to take into consideration the Resolution Entered into by the Late Continental Congress; and the Inhabitants being accordingly met the 30<sup>th</sup> day of January AD 1775 Mr. Nathan Olmstead was chosen Moderator. The Meeting then proceeded to take into Consideration the said Resolutions, and after mature Deliberation in said meeting the question was



put, Whether this Town will adopt and Conform to the Resolves contained in y<sup>e</sup> association of the Continental Congress or not. Resolved in the Negative 9 Desent.

“*Second. Resolved* N C D That we do acknowledge his Most Sacred Majesty King George the 3<sup>d</sup> to be our rightfull Sovereign and do hereby publickly avow our allegiance to him & his Lawfull successors—And that we will to the utmost of our power, Support his throne & Dignity against Evry Combination in the Universe.

“*Third. Resolved* N C D, That we do acknowledge that the three branches of y<sup>e</sup> Legislation (to wit) the King, the House of Lords and the House of Commons Convening and acting together have a constitutional Right of Government over the whole and Every part of the British Empire.

“*Fourth. Resolved* N C D that the Governour Council and Representatives of this Colony being Indulged with and having an Established Right of Legislation (tho’ restricted) in and over this Colony, We do hereby acknowledge & avow their Right of Government and Legislation in and over this Colony And are confident that they are the Rightfull & Constitutional Rulers, Directors and Guardians of our persons, properties Rights Liberties and privilidges, and We desire no other political Guides or Guardians than Said Assembly and the Officers Constitutionally appointed by them, to keep the peace & Order of y<sup>e</sup> Colony and to Superintend the Execution of the Colony Laws.

“*Fifth. Resolved* N C D That it would be dangerous and hurtfull to the Inhabitants of this Town to adopt the said Congress measures ; and we do hereby publickly disapprove of and protest against said Congress and the measures by them directed to as unconstitutional—as subversive of our real Liberties—and as countenancing Licentiousness Resolved N C D That the Town Clerk be directed to make out a true copy of y<sup>e</sup> above s<sup>d</sup> votes & transmit them to one or more of the printers in New York, that they may be published to the world.

“*Test* STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*”

“At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield by adjournment April 10<sup>th</sup> 1775 from March 7 1775.

“The Question was put Wheither y<sup>e</sup> Town will Explain their resolves of the 30<sup>th</sup> of January Lasts, Resolved in the Negative, The above Meeting is dismissed.

“*Test* STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*”

“Town Meeting Dec 17 1775.

“On Motion Made Wheither Said Meeting, upon Reconsideration do disannul the resolves April 10<sup>th</sup> entered into and passed on the 30<sup>th</sup>

Jany 1775, And adopt and approve of the Continental Congress and the measures Directed to in their association, for securing and Defending the Rights and Liberties of y<sup>e</sup> United American Colonies.

“ Resolved in the Affirmative Nem Con.

“ Said Meeting voted that the Town Clerk make out a Copy of the above, Resolve and transmit the same to one of the printers in New York, in Order that the same may be made public in the News Papers.

“ Question put Wheither s<sup>d</sup> Meeting will choose of a Committee of Inspections agreeably to the 11<sup>th</sup> article of y<sup>e</sup> association of the Continental Congress.

“ Resolved in the Affirmative.

“ And Samuel Olmsted Esq<sup>r</sup> Co<sup>l</sup> Philip Burr Bradley Daniel Coley Esq<sup>r</sup> Jacob Jones Stephen Smith Timothy Keeler, Capt Jonah Foster Nathan Olmsted William Forester John Benedict James Scott, Ebenezer Jones Abraham Betts Matthew Keeler, Timothy Benedict Nathan Stevens Samuel Gates David Platt Bartholomew Weed John Jones Daniel Smith, Ichabod Doolittle Abraham Gray Abraham Nash, Silas Hall and Azor Hurlbut were chosen Committee as abovesaid.

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield April 4<sup>th</sup> 1777 Timothy Keeler was chosen Moderator of Said Meeting Said Meeting by a Major Vote is adjourned to the Meeting House.

“ Said Meeting Pursuant to a request and Resolve of the Governor and his Committee of Safety, Chose James Scott Matthew Keeler, Timothy Benedict & Samuel Gates, a Committee to provide for the families of such soldiers as shall enlist into the Continental Army with necessaries at the prices stated by Law.

“ Voted also that this Town will Give to each man that shall Inlist as a Soldier into the Continental Service (for three years or during the war being an Inhabitant of this Town, till the Quota of the Town to fill the Continental Army be Compleated) Six pounds Lawfull money for every Year they are in said Service, to be paid as follows viz Six pounds at the time of their Inlistment.

“ The next Six pounds to be paid within the second year & so on Yearly During their Continuance in Service.

“ And those that engage, that have families, if they die in Service by Sickness or y<sup>e</sup> Sword to be paid to their Widows or Children one year after their Death.

“ Also the Town by their Major Vote do agree to adhere to the Law of this State, Regulating the prices of the Necessaries of Life.

“ Voted that the Select Men procure Money in Loan or Otherwise, on the Town Credit or in the Towns behalf for the purpose of Encourag-

ing Soldiers to Enlist into the Continental army And when the sum necessary for that purpose is known, said Meeting vote, agree and grant a Tax on the polls & Rateable Estate of the Inhabitants of this Town, on the List of 1776, in order to repay the money that is or may be so procured and Laid Out and either of the Select Men for the time being, or any other person, that the Select Men shall nominate & Depute, Shall be fully Authorized to collect the said tax &c and the same apply to the use aforesaid.

“ Said Meeting is Dismissed.

“ Test      STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*”

The following is a copy of a muster-roll of Captain Gamaliel Northrop's Company, A.D. 1776—in all probability the first company formed in the town to take part in the war of the Revolution :

Gamaliel Northrup Capt <sup>n</sup>	Levi Keeler
James Betts 1 <sup>st</sup> Lieut	Uriah Keeler
John St John 2 <sup>d</sup> Lieut	David Lavake
Ebenezer Olmsted Ensign	Jeremiah Mead
Thaddeus Keeler Serg <sup>t</sup>	Matthew Mead
Aaron Comstock Serg <sup>t</sup>	Nathaniel Northrop
Gamaliel Osborn Serg <sup>t</sup>	James Nichols
Salmon Hubbell Serg <sup>t</sup>	Enoch Olmsted
Benajah Northrop Corp <sup>l</sup>	Jeremiah Olmsted
Alvin Hyatt Corp <sup>l</sup>	Isaac Olmsted
John Thomas Corp <sup>l</sup>	Bartholomew Persons
William Lee Corp <sup>l</sup>	Stephen Remington
John Joyce Drummer	Silas Rockwell
Samuel D <sup>e</sup> Forest Fifer	Nathaniel Sterling
Seth Baker	Phineas Sherwood
John Bennett	Albert Stuart
Abraham Betts	Asa Scribner
Stephen Beers	William Scott
Dennis Collins	Joseph Trowbridge
Ammon Craw	Peter Tuttle
Arthur Forester	Hezekiah Whitlock
Moses Gilbert	Eleazer Waterous
Jared Hine	Thomas Woodbridge
David Hall	Israel White
Newton Hine	Jabez Keeler







RESIDENCE OF DR. D. L. ADAMS.—LATE RESIDENCE OF COL.  
PHILIP B. BRADLEY.



David Hoyt  
Joseph Jackson  
Thomas Jervis  
Reuben Jackson  
Lockwood Keeler  
Elijah Kellogg  
Aaron Keeler

Trowbridge Bennett  
Josiah Taylor  
Gamaliel Benedict  
Barnabas Haglin  
Ezekiel Whitney  
Seth Hubbell  
Samuel Holmes

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The following is a copy of the commission of Philip Burr Bradley, Esq., as Colonel of the Fifth Connecticut Regiment, in the regular army :

“THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

“To Philip B. Bradley Esquire. Greeting. We, Reposing especial trust and confidence in your Patriotism, Valour, Conduct, and Fidelity DO by these presents constitute and appoint you to be ‘Colonel’ of the fifth Connecticut Regiment in the Army of the United States, to take rank as such from the first day of January A.D. 1777 ; You are therefor carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of ‘Colonel’ by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And we do strictly charge and require all Officers and Soldiers, under your command, to be obedient to your orders, as Colonel. And you are to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as you shall receive from this, or a future Congress of the United States, or Committee of Congress for that purpose appointed, a Committee of the States, or Commander in Chief for the time being of the Army of the United States, or any other your Superior Officer, according to the rules and discipline of War, in pursuance of the trust reposed in you. This Commission to continue in force until revoked by this, or a future Congress, the Committee of Congress before mentioned, or a Committee of the States.



Witness His Excellency John Jay Esquire President of the Congress of the United States of America at Philadelphia the sixteenth day of March 1779 and in the third year of our Independence.  
JOHN JAY.

“Entered in the War Office and examined by the Board.

“Attest E. SCULL, *Secretary of the Board of War.*”

Colonel Bradley graduated at Yale College in A.D.

1758. He was Justice of the Peace under George III. in 1770. He was also Marshal of the District of Connecticut during the first terms of Washington as President and also during the administration of John Adams.

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield Nov 17<sup>th</sup> 1777 Capt Jonah Foster was chosen Moderator of s<sup>d</sup> meeting.

“ Said Meeting by their Major Vote Chose David Olmstead, Samuel Olmsted 3<sup>rd</sup>, Timothy Keeler 2<sup>d</sup>, Ebenezer Jones, John Waterous, Silas Hull, Ichabod Doolittle, Daniel Rockwell, Bartholomew Weed to be a Committee to procure Cloathing, for the Soldiers in the Continental Army (that the Assembly of this State, hath Required the Town to provide for).

“ *Test*      STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*”

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield January 8<sup>th</sup> 1778, Lieut Nathan Olmsted was chosen Moderator of said Meeting.

“ The Question was put in said Meeting, Wheither the Articles of confederation and perpetual Union, Drawn up and published by the Honourable, Continental Congress be approved. Resolved in the Affirmative.

“ *Test*      STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*”

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield March 3<sup>d</sup> 1778 Samuel Olmstead Esq<sup>r</sup> was chosen Moderator of said Meeting.

“ By a Major Vote said Meeting made choice of John Benedict Esq<sup>r</sup> and Timothy Keeler 2<sup>d</sup> to be a Committee to distribute the Salt, belonging to this Town as follows viz One Quart thereof to each person of the several families of the men or that are Inhabitants of this town that have taken the Oath of fidelity to the State of Connecticut, and likewise to each person of the families of the Widows in this Town that are accounted friendly to the United States of America, and likewise to each person of the families of those men in this Town that are in the Continental Army ; and said Committee are to take 6d Lawfull money per Quart for the same, of the persons they deliver the salt to ; and that said Committee attend upon y<sup>e</sup> business of Delivering the salt, on the afternoon of each Thursday and Monday in this month till the whole be delivered out, and also Keep and Render true accounts of their doings in the premises to the Select Men by the first of April next.

“ Voted also that the Committee appointed to take care and provide for the families of the Men in the Continental Army, Receive or draw

out of the town Treasury £6. 0<sup>s</sup>. 0<sup>d</sup> agreeable to the Vote of the Town and lay the same out for the use and benefit of the Widow and family of Elisha Gilbert deceased.

“ *Test*      STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*”

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield 9 Aug 1779 Samuel Olmsted Esq<sup>r</sup> was chosen Moderator of said meeting. Said meeting was adjourned from the Town House to the Meeting House.

“ Samuel Olmsted Esq<sup>r</sup> and Mr Robert Edmond were chosen Delegates for the Town in order to meet in County Convention at Redding on the 10<sup>th</sup> Instant at the Dwelling House of Lieut Stephen Betts at 8 O'clock in the morning in order to consult and adopt suitable measures to prevent the further Deprecciation of the paper Currency and Raise its value.

“ In said Meeting the Question was put Wheither any person that was an inhabitant in this Town, and hath Absconded and gone over to or joined the Enemy of the United States (and hath returned or shall return unto the Town) be admitted to dwell in the Town, without the Liberty & approbation of the Town first had and obtained by such person or persons. Resolved in the negative.

“ *Test*      STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*”

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgfield June 29 1780.

“ Daniel Coley Esq<sup>r</sup> was chosen Moderator of said meeting.

“ Said Meeting Granted a Tax of six pence Lawfull money on the pound on the Town List of 1779 to be collected by the first day of August next and put into the Town Treasury.

“ Said Meeting granted to each able bodied effective man that shall voluntarily, Inlist or hath lately been detach'd to fill up this Towns quota in the Continental Army thirty Shillings Lawfull money per month during the time they are in said service. Also to each Soldier that shall or hath lately been Detach'd for this state service (as a soldier) Thirty Shillings Lawfull money per month for all the time they shall be in said service over and above one month and the money to be drawn out of the Town Treasury and paid to them respectively. Daniel Coley Esq<sup>r</sup> and David Scott was by said meeting appointed a Committee for that purpose.”

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield Aug 23<sup>d</sup> 1780.

“ Timothy Keeler was chosen Moderator of said Meeting.

“ Said Meeting by their Major vote Revoked the vote of the Town whereby a tax was granted of six pence on the pound on the List of 1779 in a Town Meeting held June 29 1780.

"Said Meeting Voted that they would raise money by Tax on the List of 1779 and give to the Soldiers and non Commissioned officers that have been or shall be in the Service of the Continental and this State from the first of last March during this years campaign.

"Said Meeting made choise of Benjamin Smith, William Forester, Timothy Keeler Esq<sup>r</sup> Stephen Smith and Stephen Norris a Committee to prepare a Memorial to be prefered to the General Assembly. Requesting that for the future the method of Raising and procureing Soldiers for the Continental and State Service the present war, may be by classing men, viz all the men from sixteen and upward—and each class to procure a man for said service.

"Test      STEPHEN SMITH *Register.*"

"At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1780 Daniel Coley Esq was chosen Moderator of said Meeting.

"Said Meeting Voted that a Committee should be chosen and as soon as may be to make Enquiry and Obtain the number of the Men that the Town is Deficient respecting their Quota of Soldiers in the Continental Army And Thaddeus Rockwell and William Forrister were chosen for the purpose aforesaid.

"Also said Meeting by their Major vote made Choice of Nathan Smith and William Forrister to receive the salt necessary for putting up the Provisions required of this Town to be provided for the Army and to perform every part respecting said Provisions agreeable to an Act of the General Assembly of this State in their last session."

"At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield Feby 8<sup>th</sup> 1781 Capt Jonah Foster was Chosen Moderator of said Meeting.

"Said Meeting Voted that the method for raising and procuring five Men for this State Service to serve as Soldiers in Col Bebees Regiment at Horseneck for the term of one year, be by classing the Inhabitants into five classes.

"And that three of the classes divided out to procure Soldiers for filling up the Continental Army be formed into one class. And the three committee men living in the southern three classes that were appointed to class the Inhabitants as above expressed be a committee for the class in the southern part of the Town and so successively through the Town to the North end thereof.

"And Samuel Olmsted Esq, Nathan Olmsted and Robert Edmond be a committee for the Southern class, And John Benedict Esq Benjamin Smith and John Jones a committee for y<sup>e</sup> second class.

"And Col Bradley Stephen Smith and Silas Hull a committee for the third class.

“ And Daniel Smith, Matthew Northrop and Jonah Foster a committee for y<sup>e</sup> fourth class.

“ And Daniel Coley Esq, W<sup>m</sup> Forrister and Capt Sears a committee for the fifth class.

“ Also said meeting Resolved that the Representatives of this town be and they are hereby Instructed to use their Influence in the Honorable General Assembly in remonstrating to Congress against a late resolve of Congress respecting the setting of half pay on the supernumerary Officers lately belonging to the Continental Army.”

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1781.

“ Col Philip B Bradley was chosen Moderator of said meeting.

“ Said Meeting made choice of Capt David Olmsted, Col Bradley, Ebenezer Olmsted William Forrister and Stephen Norris a committee to procure Soldiers to complete the Towns Quota for filling up the Continental Army and this States service.

“ Said Meeting Resolved and Ordered that the several classes that have procured Recruits for the Continental Army deliver their said Recruits to the Selectmen at the houses of Clements Smith and Daniel Coley Esq On Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of this Instant at ten oclock in the morning in order to be taken to Danbury to be Mustered and delivered to an Officer and forwarded to the Continental Army.”

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield April 13<sup>th</sup> 1781.

“ Capt Jonah Foster was chosen Moderator of said Meeting.”

“ Said Meeting made choice of John Benedict Samuel Olmsted Esq, Col Bradley and William Forrister a committee (In Behalf of the Town) to make a settlement with the Men that were in service the last campaign either Continental or State that were Inhabitants of or counted for the Towns Quota ; Or with a committee by them appointed respecting two Grants they say was made them by y<sup>e</sup> Town at their Town Meetings held in Ridgefield on y<sup>e</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> day of June 1780 and on y<sup>e</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1780 and make report to a future Town Meeting.”

The campaign of 1777 opened with the invasion of Connecticut by the British, for the first time during the war.

The following account is taken from “ Hollister’s History of Connecticut,” vol. 2, chap. 12 :

“ Sir William Howe had been informed that the Americans had large depositories of military stores in Danbury and its neighborhood.



“ He determined to destroy them without delay, and in casting about him for a faithful operator, in this most invidious of all employments—who would be remorseless in the use of the torch—he hit readily upon His Excellency Governor Tryon of New York. He could hardly have made a more admirable selection.

“ Howe was a shrewd judge of character, and knew well that nothing so effectually calls out the latent energies of a man of genius as a sudden appeal to old and cherished recollections. Now there was no part of the world that could awaken in the mind of William Tryon so many lively and searching associations as Connecticut. The name of the little republic made His Excellency’s hair bristle with certain sensations that a soldier ought not to entertain. From the time when that irreverent company of Connecticut dragoons had scattered the type belonging to the administration organ through the streets of New York, and driven off his pet, Rivington, with hundreds of Tories—that were worthy of being elevated to the dignity of governor’s horse-guards—he had felt the liveliest emotions at the very sound of the word Connecticut. In some way it was inseparably connected in his mind with that charming society called the ‘ Sons of Liberty.’

“ General Howe showed his shrewdness not only in selecting his agent for this work, but also in sending along with him, to see that he did not lose himself in his explorations into a land that was so dear to him, those excellent advisers, General Agnew and Sir William Erskine. Those gentlemen furnished intellectual resources for the major-general, and he added the warmth of his nature to give soul to the enterprise. Accordingly, a detachment of two thousand men were

selected from the choice spirits of the British army, and nominally placed under Tryon's command. They embarked at New York, and, under the convoy of a fine naval armament of twenty-five vessels, passed over the waters of Long Island Sound, in such high spirits as the warmth of an April sun and the pleasing anticipations of the business that was to employ them were calculated to inspire. They had chosen a time when Connecticut was almost entirely deserted by her male population, who had gone out to defend the soil of other States, and stay up the trailing banner of the noble Washington.

“They had left their homes to be guarded, with the exception of a few gallant troops, by the crutches of the grandfathers and the distaffs of the grandmothers who had two generations of descendants in the field, hundreds of miles away. On this account His Excellency, who was the very antipode of gunpowder Percy, had nothing to dampen his mood or cloud his brow. As the ships skimmed past the coast towns of western Connecticut, the people gazed at them with mingled curiosity and anxiety. Perhaps some of them called to mind the doings of Wallace, master of the *Rose*, at Stonington; but no particular alarm appears to have been excited until the heads of the ships began to point toward the island that stands out from the Norwalk shore.

“At about four o'clock, they cast anchor in Saugatuck harbor, and, with such haste as is consistent with a picnic excursion into the country, two thousand men, consisting of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, went ashore in boats, and, under the superintendence of Tryon, with two Tory guides to show them the way,

moved forward toward Danbury. They marched about eight miles that night, and encamped in the township of Weston.

“On the morning of the 26th, at a very seasonable hour, Tryon arrived at Reading Ridge, where was a small hamlet of peaceful inhabitants, almost every one of them patriots, and most of them farmers, who had crowned the high hill where they had chosen to build their Zion with a tall, gaunt church, which drew to its aisles, one day in seven, the people that dwelt upon the sides of the hills, and in the bosom of the valleys within the range of the summons that sounded from its belfry. By way of satisfying his hunger with a morning lunch, until he could provide a more substantial meal, he drew up his artillery in front of this weather-beaten edifice, that had before defied every thing save the grace of God and the supplications of his worshippers, and gave it a good round of canister and grape, that pierced its sides through and through, and shattered its small-paned windows into fragments. The only spectators to this heroic demonstration were a few women and little children, some of whom ran away at the sight of the red-coats, and others faced the invaders with a menacing stare.

“The British commander now resumed his march for some distance without meeting with the least opposition, until he began to ascend Hoyt’s Hill, when the figure of a single mounted horseman appeared upon the summit of the eminence, with his face turned backward, and his gestures and whole action indicating that he was issuing orders to a large army that was climbing the side of the hill. ‘Halt!’ shouted the leader of the opposition in a voice of thunder, while he flourished his

sword in the air, 'Halt! the whole universe—wheel into kingdoms!' Now there was nothing that General Tryon had such a dread of as dying. He prudently commanded his men to halt, in imitation of the order given by the leader of the supposed army that was advancing, and sent out detachments on the right and left to reconnoitre, and got his two field pieces that were consecrated by the mutilation of the old church in readiness to give such feeble battle as he could to this more than Persian array. The reader can judge how much His Excellency was relieved when the vedettes returned and informed him that the wretch who had thus disturbed his valor was the only mortal in sight, and that no part of him was visible except his back as he rode toward Danbury with the speed of a shooting star. Little else occurred of an alarming character during the march.

"They arrived in Danbury about two o'clock. There were a few Continental soldiers in the place, but they could not make a stand against this large invading party, and were obliged to withdraw. General Tryon selected the house of one Dibble, a faithful Tory, for his head-quarters, who lived at the south end of the main street, close by the spot where the military stores had been deposited. As Generals Erskine and Agnew were advancing under the protection of a corps of light infantry, to take up their quarters at the other end of the same street, the party was fired upon by four young men from the house of Major Starr. This brave but rash act cost the young patriots their lives. They were instantly pursued and shot. A poor negro who was caught near them without weapons in his hands



was also murdered, and the five bodies were thrown into the house, which was instantly set on fire.

“ A man named Hamilton had on deposit at a clothier’s in the lower part of the village a piece of cloth, which he was determined at all hazards to rescue from sequestration. He accordingly rode to the shop, and having secured one end of the cloth to the pommel of his saddle, galloped rapidly away. He was seen by the enemy’s light horsemen, who followed hard upon him, exclaiming, ‘ We’ll have you, old daddy ; we’ll have you.’ ‘ Not yet,’ said Hamilton, as he redoubled his speed. The troops gain upon their intended victim ; the nearest one raises his sabre to strike, when fortunately the cloth unrolls, and, fluttering like a streamer far behind, so frightens the pursuing horses that they cannot be brought within striking distance of the pursued. The chase continues through the whole extent of the village to the bridge, where finally the old gentleman and his cloth made good their escape.

“ A large quantity of the public stores had been deposited in the Episcopal church, and the first work of the soldiers was to remove them into the street and burn them. Some of the provisions were also stored in a barn belonging to Dibble. This building was treated with the same respect, as its proprietor had the honor to entertain General Tryon as a guest. Another barn belonging to a friend of American liberty, which had been appropriated to the same use, was set on fire and consumed with its contents. In a few hours, eighteen hundred barrels of pork and beef, seven hundred barrels of flour, two thousand bushels of wheat, rye, oats, and Indian corn, clothing for a regiment of



troops, and seventeen hundred and ninety tents, were burned. The smoke arising from the destruction of this property was strangulating and filled the whole air, while the streets ran with the melted pork and beef.

“There was also a large quantity of liquors in some of the buildings. These the soldiers were most reluctant to destroy, and did not do so until after they had drank so freely of them that when the labors of the day were ended only a few hundred were fit for duty. While the imbruted soldiers piled the fuel around the flour and beef and stirred up the laggard flames to a fiercer glare, the women and little children could see by the fitful light the mark of the white cross that had been distinctly drawn upon the Tory dwellings, to signify that the destroying angel about to go through the town would stay his hand at their door-posts, and pass them by unharmed. The same dingy light now disclosed a scene of loathsome drunkenness that surpasses description. Hundreds lay scattered at random wherever the palsying demon had overtaken them—some in the streets, with their faces blackened with smoke and soiled with earth, others sprawling in the door-yards, and others still, wild with excitement, holding themselves up by fences and trees or grasping fast hold of each other, called loudly with oaths and curses to be led against the rebels.

“In this horrible condition the Revolutionary patriots of Danbury saw the shades of night gather around their dwellings, and in sleepless apprehension did they count the hours as they dragged slowly on. Nor did the brigand who led this band of incendiaries pass the night in sleep. The faithful few who had resisted the

temptations of the cup were on the alert, and brought him from time to time the unwelcome intelligence that groups of patriot farmers were fast dropping in from the neighboring villages and towns, and were beginning to form into organized companies. What if Wooster, or Parsons, or Huntington, or Arnold should prove to be at the head of them, and should steal upon him while his troops were in that defenceless condition? The thought was horrible! Thus heavily passed the watches of that gloomy Saturday night. At last the day began to approach, and reason, unsettled for a while in the dull brains of the British soldiers, returned to them again. The marks of the late dissipation still appeared in their swollen faces and bloodshot eyes; but they were now able to stand upright, to grasp a musket, and defend themselves against the farmers who were gathering, ill-armed and undisciplined as they were, to oppose them. Then the British general began to breathe more easily, and to exhibit in a more striking manner the remarkable traits of his genius. He drew up his forces in order of defence; he attended to all the arrangements, and presided over every detail of the preparations that he was making to usher in, with ceremonies worthy of the occasion, another Sabbath-day. On a sudden, as if by the pulling of a wire upon the stage, the curtains of darkness were withdrawn from the village, and like a will-o'-the-wisp, and wandering zigzag from street to street, from house to house, passed the flaming torch of the incendiary. The Congregational meeting-house, the largest and most expensive building in the place, is soon discovered to be on fire, and, one after another, the dwellings, stores, and barns of that peaceful com-

munity add their tributary lamps to that great centre beacon of the town, until every house, save those that have the mystic sign upon them, is in a broad blaze. Meanwhile, by the light of their own homes, mothers, screening their babies from the bleak air with the scanty clothing that they had snatched up in haste and denied to themselves, crippled old men and palsied women, and little boys and girls clinging to their feeble protectors, made such haste as they could to save their lives from the fire, taking care to avoid the jeers of their comfortable Tory neighbors, who looked out from the doors and windows where the white cross glared in mockery, alike of God and of humanity ; and to shun at the same time the unhallowed contact of the soldiers, they ran, crawled, or were carried upon their beds, into lonely lanes, damp pastures, and leafless woods. Having witnessed the destruction of the meeting-house, nineteen dwelling-houses, twenty-two stores and barns, and great quantities of hay and grain that belonged to the inhabitants of the place, and having feasted his eyes with the fear and anguish of the women against whom he waged this glorious war, Major-General Tryon, taking a last fond look of the scene of his exploits, and noting doubtless the artistic effect of the faint blue smoke-wreaths as they curled upward to stain the blushing forehead of the morning, withdrew his troops and resumed his march toward the sea-shore.

“ When the invader was fairly out of sight, the poor fugitives from their several hiding-places returned, and, cowering over the charred timbers of the homes that they had fled from, warmed their shivering frames and trembling hands over the ruins of Danbury.

“ In the mean time the news of Tryon’s arrival flew along the whole coast. Early on the morning of the 26th, General Sillman with about five hundred militia, such as he had been able to gather upon a sudden call, pursued the enemy, and not long after the venerable Wooster, who had started off at a moment’s warning to defend the soil of his native State from insult, joined him with Arnold and another handful of militia. A heavy rain retarded their movements so much that they did not reach Bethel till late at night. It was therefore decided to attack the enemy on their return.

“ On the morning of the 27th, the American troops were astir at a very early hour. General Wooster detached General Sillman and Arnold, with about five hundred men, to advance and intercept the enemy in front, while he undertook with the remainder, amounting only to two hundred half-armed militia, to attack them in the rear. About nine o’clock he overtook Tryon’s army, some three miles above Ridgefield, on the Norwalk road, and, taking advantage of the uneven ground, fell upon a whole regiment with such impetuosity as to throw them into confusion and break their ranks. Before they could be restored to order, he had succeeded in taking forty prisoners—a number equal to one fifth part of his whole force. He continued to hang upon their skirts and harass them for some time, waiting for another favorable opportunity to make an attack. A few miles from Ridgefield, where the hills appeared to offer a chance of breaking their ranks a second time, he again charged furiously upon them. The rear guard, chagrined at the result of the former encounter, now faced about and met him with a discharge of artillery and small arms.



“ His men returned their shot resolutely at first, but, as they were unused to battle, they soon began to fall back. Wooster, uniting all the fire of youth with the experience of an old soldier, who had seen hard service in more than one field, sought to inspire them with his own courage. Turning his horse’s head and waving his sword, he called out to them in a brisk tone, ‘ Come on, my boys ; never mind such random shots.’ Before he had time to turn his face again toward the enemy, a musket-ball aimed by a Tory marksman penetrated his back, breaking the spinal column and lodging in the fleshy parts of his body. He instantly fell from his horse. His faithful friends stripped his sash from his person and bore him upon it from the field.

“ Arnold and Sillman made a forced march to Ridgefield, and arrived there about eleven o’clock. They threw up a temporary barricade across the road on the rising ground, and stationed their little party in such a manner as to cover their right flank by a house and barn, and their left by a ledge of rocks. Here they quietly awaited the enemy. As soon as Agnew and Erskine saw what position the Americans had taken, they advanced and received their fire, and, though they sustained considerable loss, they returned it with spirit. The action lasted about ten minutes, when the British gained the ledge of rocks, and the Americans were obliged to retreat. The American officers behaved with great spirit. Arnold was shot at by a whole platoon of soldiers, standing not more than thirty yards from him. His horse was killed under him, but no other ball took effect. Snatching his pistols, he shot dead a soldier who was making up to him to



run him through with his bayonet, and thus made his escape. The Americans kept up a scattering fire till nearly night, when General Tryon encamped at Ridgefield. In the morning he set fire to the church, but he probably did not superintend this piece of work himself, as it was so inartistically done that it proved to be a failure.

“ He was more fortunate with four dwelling-houses which he soon had the satisfaction to see wrapped in flames. He now resumed his march, but Arnold followed him up so closely that he soon crossed the Saugatuck River, and marched on the east side of it, while the Americans kept pace with him on the left. Thus they advanced, cannonading each other whenever they could find a convenient opportunity. About three o'clock in the afternoon the gallant Colonel Deming, with a little party of Continental troops, forded the river where it was about four feet deep, and, unperceived by the enemy, attacked them with desperate violence upon the rear and upon the left flank, pursuing them and keeping up a galling fire that did them very serious harm. Arnold pushed forward toward the mouth of the river, and, drawing his men up in good order upon a hill, opened a heavy fire upon the right flank of the enemy's rear. The Americans could follow them no further on account of the dangerous proximity of the ships. The British troops who were marching in the van immediately embarked, while the centre and rear formed on a hill. While Arnold was discharging his cannon at the boats, and while Deming was plying the Major-General in the rear, Colonel Lamb, who was from New York, and, of course, one of His Excellency's own subjects, crept with about

two hundred men behind a stone wall, and gave him a parting salute at the distance of about one hundred yards.

“Glad enough was Tryon to get aboard his good ship once more, and it is believed that he cherished to his dying day the recollection of his first visit to Connecticut.”

It would be a matter of interest to many to know just what kind of a report was made of this raid by General Tryon to his superior officers, and through them to the British Government.

In the June number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, printed in London in the year 1777, we have the following statement :

“General Howe has transmitted to Lord George Germaine the following particulars of a recent successful enterprise for the destruction of stores at the village of Danbury in Connecticut.

“The troops landed without opposition in the afternoon of the 25th of April, about four miles to the eastward of Norwalk, and twenty miles from Danbury.

“In the afternoon of the 26th the detachment reached Danbury, meeting only small parties of the enemy on their march, but General Tryon having intelligence that the whole force of the country was collecting, to take every advantage of the strong ground he was to pass on his return to the shipping, and finding it impossible to procure carriages to bring off any part of the stores, they were effectually destroyed, in the execution of which the village was unavoidably burned.

“On the 27th, in the morning, the troops quitted Danbury, and met with little opposition until they came near to Ridgefield, which was occupied by General Ar-

nold, who had thrown up intrenchments to dispute the passage, while General Wooster hung upon the rear with a separate corps. The village was forced, and the enemy drove back on all sides.

“ General Tryon lay that night at Ridgefield, and renewed his march on the morning of the 28th.

“ The enemy, having been reinforced with troops and cannon, disputed every advantageous situation, keeping at the same time smaller parties to harass the rear, until the General had formed his detachment upon a height within cannon-shot of the shipping, when the enemy advancing seemingly with an intention to attack him, he ordered the troops to charge their bayonets, which was executed with such impetuosity that the rebels were totally put to flight, and the detachment embarked without further molestation.

“ Return of the forces, ordnance, provisions, etc., as nearly as could be ascertained, found at the rebels stores, and destroyed by the King’s troops, at Danbury, etc., in Connecticut, April 27th, 1777.

“ A quantity of ordnance stores, with iron, etc., 4000 barrels of beef and pork, 1000 barrels of flour, 100 large tierces of biscuit, 89 barrels of rice, 120 puncheons of rum.

“ Several large stores of wheat, oats, and Indian corn, in bulk the quantity thereof could not possibly be ascertained, 30 pipes of wine, 100 hogsheads of sugar, 50 hogsheads of molasses, 20 casks of coffee, 15 large casks filled with medicine of all kinds, 10 barrels of saltpetre, 1020 tents and marquees, a number of iron boilers, a large quantity of hospital bedding, etc.; engineers’, pioneers’, and carpenters’ tools; a printing-press complete; tar, tallow, etc.; 5000 pairs of shoes and stockings.

“ At a mill (Smith’s mill) between Ridgebury and Ridgefield, 100 barrels of flour and a quantity of Indian corn.

“ At the bridge at the west brace of Norwalk River, and in the woods contiguous : 100 hogsheads of rum ; several chests of arms ; paper cartridges ; field forges ; 300 tents.

“ Return of the killed, wounded, and missing :

“ One drummer and fifer, 23 rank and file, killed ; 3 field officers, 6 captains, 3 subalterns, 9 sergeants, 92 rank and file, wounded ; one drummer and fifer, 27 rank and file missing.

“ (Signed.)

W. HOWE.

“ The following is an additional list of the wounded :

“ Capt. Thorne, Capt. Durmas, Lieut. Hastings, Major Conran, Capt. Rutherford, Ensign Menichin, Second Lieut. Price, Volunteer Vale, Major Hope, Capt. Calder, Ensign Mercer, Prince of Wales, American volunteer, Col. Browne, Capt. Lyman, Capt. Secon, and Capt. Simon Frazer.

“ Return of the rebels killed : General Wooster, Gen. Gould, Col. Lamb, of the Artillery, Col. Herman, Dr. Atwater, a man of considerable influence, Capt. Cove, Lieut. Thompson, and 100 privates.

“ List of rebel wounded : Col. Whiting, Capt. Benjamin, Lieut. Cove, and 250 privates.

“ Taken prisoners, 50 privates, including several committee men.”

J. Howard King, Esq., has in his possession the chair used by Major Andre, while a prisoner in the hands of his grandfather General Joshua King.

## CHAPTER VI.

### INCIDENTS OF REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY.

THERE is a prevailing impression among the inhabitants of the town that General Wooster's forces first attacked the rear of General Tryon's army, on the flat immediately north of Mr. Lewis C. Hunt's house. Facts will not justify this opinion. General Wooster made his *first* attack on the enemy after they had ascended the hill commonly known as Scott's Ridge, and probably while a part were still engaged at their morning meal, for it was at this point that Tryon's army breakfasted.

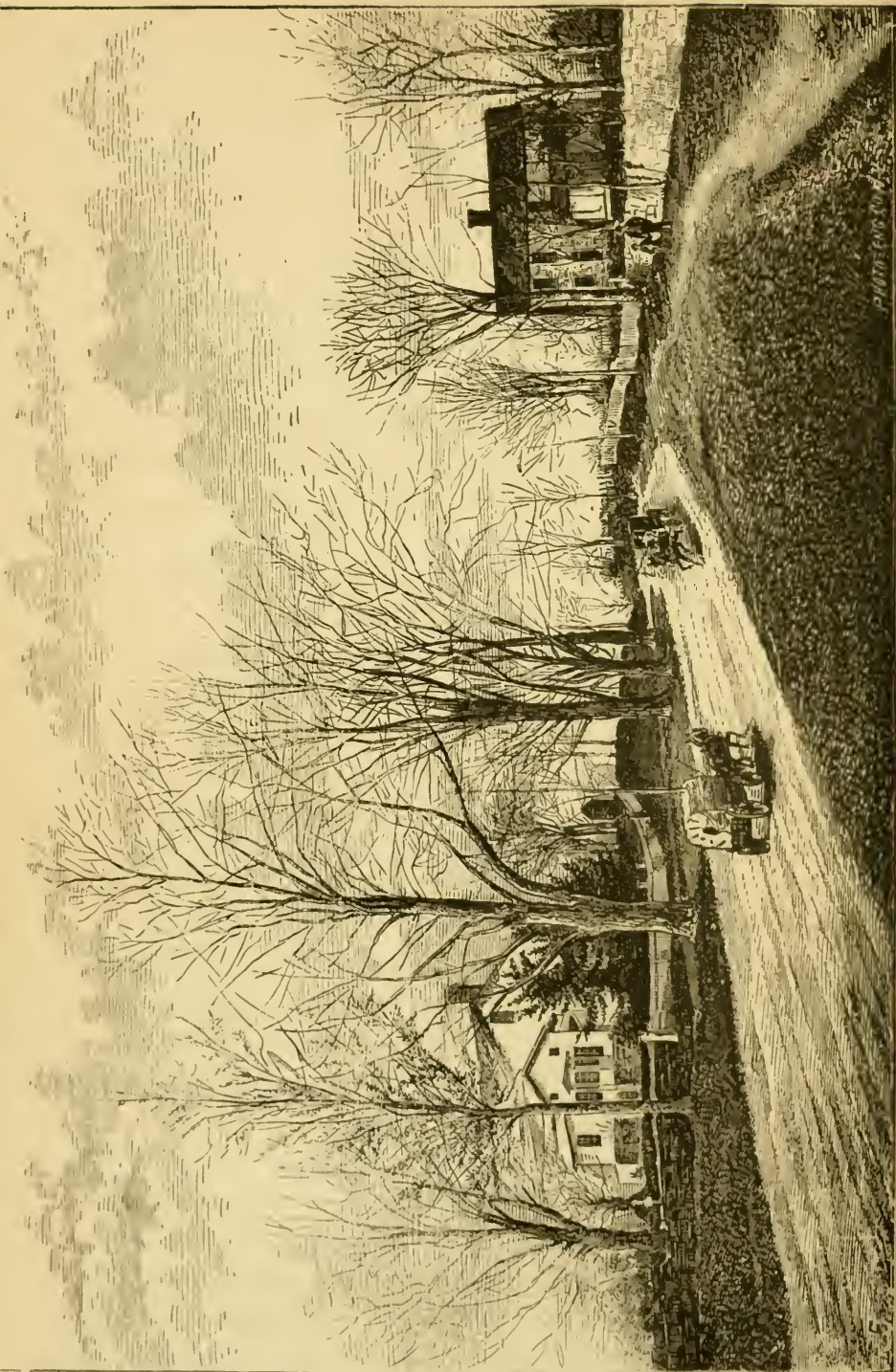
The battle was fought immediately north of Mr. Samuel Scott's house, and in front of the school-house. It was here that General Wooster took forty prisoners, and it was doubtless here that the two Hessian soldiers were mortally wounded, who died on their way to the village, and were hastily buried in the sand-knoll north of Mr. Zalmon Main's.

After securing and disposing of the prisoners taken, General Wooster again overtook the British on the flat north of Mr. Lewis C. Hunt's, and about two miles north of the village of Ridgefield.

It was here that the gallant general was wounded, at the very beginning of the engagement. Indeed, tradition says that General Wooster was wounded by a Tory in ambush, and *not* by the enemy proper; however this may be, it is certain that the attack had but







just commenced. We are not able to learn that a single life was lost.

About this time in the morning, General Arnold arrived at Ridgefield with five hundred men, and began at once to throw up a barricade across the road at the north end of the village, between the north-west corner of Miss Sarah Stebbins's door-yard and the ledge of rocks upon which the house of Mr. William Lee now stands. This was about eleven o'clock in the morning. An hour later, or at twelve o'clock, General Tryon had reached the place, and a general engagement took place.

An eye-witness says that sixteen British and eight Americans were killed in this engagement, and that they were buried in two graves, near the hickory tree which now stands just inside the fence, east of the road, in the open lot, between Miss Sarah Stebbins's and Mr. Abner Gilbert's. The point is easily found in the right-hand side of the picture, where the two children are seen standing.

The sixteen British were buried in one grave and the eight Americans in another.

The wounded were taken into the house now occupied by Miss Sarah Stebbins, and tenderly cared for. The blood-stains are said to be still seen on the oaken floors. The house itself is a standing monument to the battle. The path of one or more cannon-balls is plainly traced.

The bravery of General Arnold in this engagement amounted almost to recklessness. After the enemy had broken through the temporary barricade, and all his own soldiers except Captain Bell had deserted him,

he still stood his ground, receiving the undivided fire of a whole company of the enemy.

His horse fell under him, pierced by nine bullets, and at the moment of its fall his foot became entangled in the stirrup. A soldier, taking advantage of this moment of the General's disability, rushed up to him, exclaiming, "You are my prisoner!" "Not yet," quickly replied General Arnold, and drawing a pistol from his holster shot him dead, then regaining his feet, he hastily retreated amid the repeated fire of the enemy.

It is commonly reported that it was a Tory from Milford by the name of Coon who thus attempted to take General Arnold prisoner, as also that General Arnold said as the bullet sped on its fatal mission, "One live man is worth ten dead ones."

Immediately after this action the British marched through the street, occasionally discharging their artillery, a terror to all but a few Tories, who felt that the long-delayed moment of their exaltation had come.

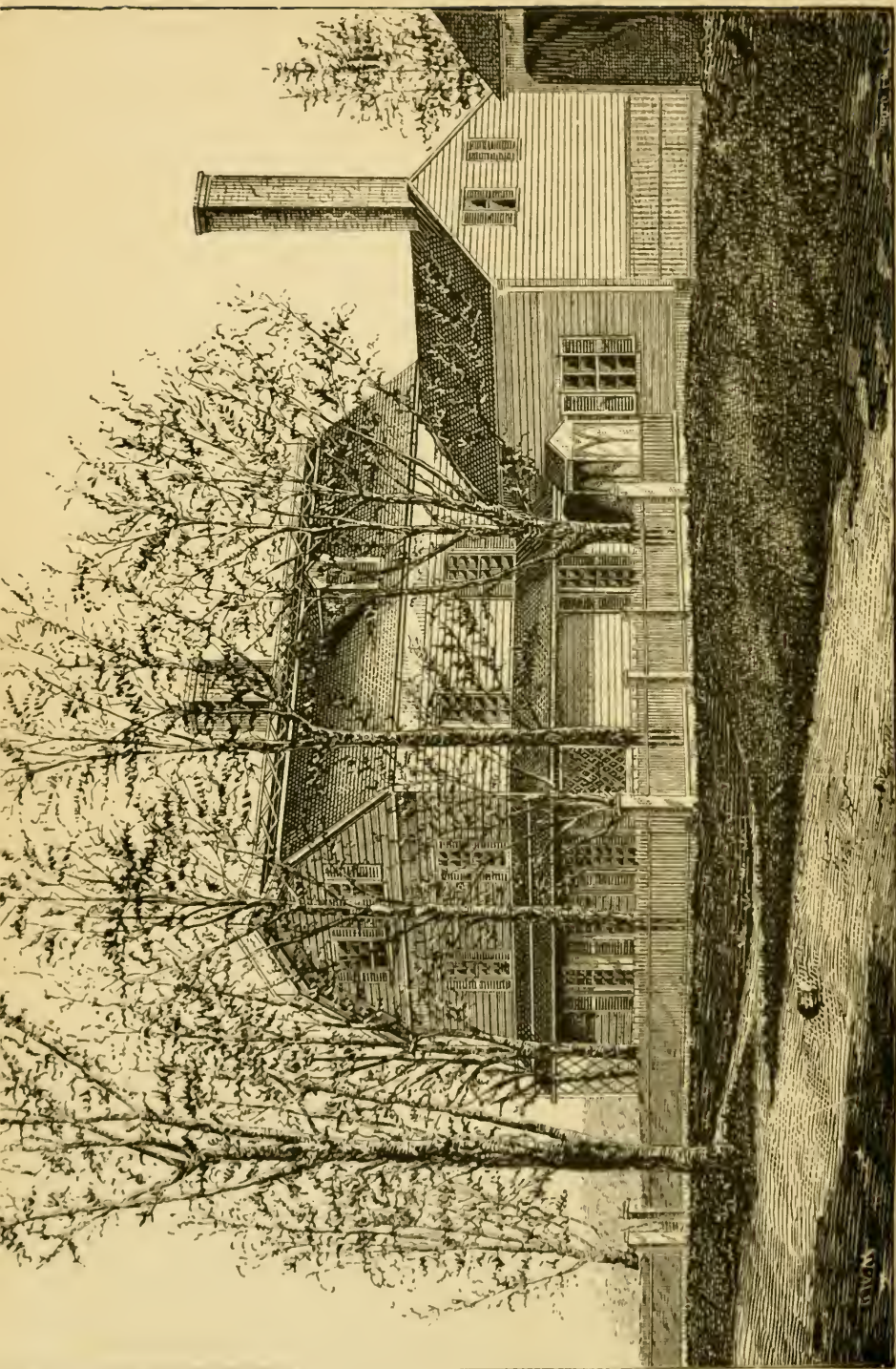
Halting a little below the village, they proceeded to encamp for the night on the grounds of Mr. Samuel Olmsted—now owned and occupied by Mr. Hiram Seymour, a descendant of the family.

The selectmen of the town, in their petition to the General Assembly, dated May 26th, 1777, stated that the enemy, in passing through the town, burned the grist-mill and saw-mill of Isaac Keeler, six dwellings and two barns, and killed and carried off a number of horses, sheep, and cattle.

During their stay they also plundered the inhabitants of nearly all their provisions and a large share of their clothing, by which many were reduced to pov-







erty. The town, unable to relieve all the sufferers, applied to General Assembly for help.

Nehemiah Beardsley, Increase Mosely, and Lemuel Sanford were appointed a committee to estimate the respective losses of the inhabitants. After a close investigation, the total amount was fixed at £2625 1s. 8d.

On the exact spot where General Arnold's horse was shot from under him a tamarack tree now stands; it was placed there to commemorate the event. It is inside Mr. Lee's yard-fence, a little south-east of his house.

On their way down the street the British soldiers planted a gun in front of the Episcopal church, and shot several balls into the house now owned and occupied by Mr. Abijah Resseguie, one of which was lodged in a post on the north-east corner, and is still to be seen imbedded deeply in the solid wood.

Another ball passed between the feet of a man who at the time was ascending the stairs. Frightened by the close proximity of the unwelcome messenger, he exclaimed, "I'm a dead man, I'm a dead man!" and tradition says that he actually rolled to the foot of the stairs. But upon examination it was found that he was not only *not dead*, but wholly unharmed.

The reason for cannonading this particular house was to dislodge certain parties who were reported to be in the building, making cartridges. The house was occupied by Mr. Timothy Keeler, a sturdy Federalist.

The house a few rods south, on the site of the one now owned by Mr. Thaddeus Keeler, was then occupied by a loyalist by the name of Hoyt. It was through his interposition with General Tryon that Mr. Keeler's house was rescued from the torch of the

incendiary, the reason for it being attributed to purely selfish motives. The wind was blowing strongly from the north-west, and his own house would be greatly endangered.

The story is told that Mr. Keeler's house was actually set on fire after he had retreated to the woods, and that Mr. Hoyt, fearing the effect of the fire on his own buildings, obtained permission from the British officers to extinguish the flames. After the enemy had left, Mr. Keeler, returning from the woods, was met by Mr. Hoyt, who greeted him with the exclamation, "You may thank me that your house was not destroyed." "No, sir," replied Keeler, "I will not thank a Tory for any thing. I would *rather thank the Lord* for the north wind."

Following close in the wake of the left wing of the enemy was a company of half-grown boys—Ebenezer Jones, the son of Captain Jones, of the number. Coming up to a large rock standing on an eminence in a field, now owned by Mr. David Hoyt, a little south-east of Mr. Henry Benedict's, they found a British soldier who had been mortally wounded.

Young Jones returned home, and related the circumstance to his father, who, in humanity to a fallen foe, saddled his horse, rode down to the spot, and brought the wounded soldier to his own house, where he was carefully nursed until he died. Then Mr. Jones with his own hands made for him a pine coffin, and buried him in the old yard east of Mr. Joel Benjamin's barn.

Four of the six houses at this time burned by the enemy were as follows: viz., the house of Isaac Keeler, near Mamasnag Pond, a house on the High Ridge north of Mr. W. O. Seymour's, the house of Benjamin



Northrop, a short distance south of Mr. George Haight's, on the opposite side of the road, and a building used by the British for the care of their wounded over-night, previously occupied by Mr. Thomas Seymour. This house stood on the south side of the Fair Ground, now owned by the Agricultural Society.

The two buildings on High Ridge were probably burned in the evening—the one near Mamanasquag Lake in the early part of the day, and the fourth, that on the present Fair Ground, on the morning of their departure.

The well standing near the house they filled with stones, which have never been removed. Their object in filling this well is not known. It may have been owing to the supposition that valuables were secreted there, or it may have been, as some suppose, that their own dead were thrown in it. This last supposition, however, is scarcely probable, for they are known to have buried those who had died during the night in the upper part of Flat Rock woods.

Among those who witnessed this engagement between General Tryon's forces and our own at the head of Ridgefield Street was a young man scarcely seventeen years of age, by the name of Jeremiah Keeler. The scene aroused all the patriotic fire within his soul, and determined his course for the future. At the solicitation of Colonel Bradley, he eagerly enlisted in the regular army, and by his courage and fidelity reflected great credit upon his native town.

With the Connecticut line he shared the fatigues and dangers of the three memorable years that immediately followed. Shortly after which, being selected by Baron Steuben, he joined the Light Infantry com-

manded by General de La Fayette, under whom he held the post of orderly sergeant. He was frequently appointed to execute difficult and responsible duties ; and on an occasion of this kind the Marquis presented him with a sword and his thanks as a testimonial of his regard for a faithful and courageous soldier. At the memorable siege of Yorktown, when La Fayette's Brigade was employed to storm one of the British forts, Sergeant Keeler was one of the first who, in the midst of a murderous fire, scaled the breastworks and compelled the enemy to yield. He witnessed the surrender of Cornwallis, which virtually terminated the war, but he remained faithfully at his post until the disbanding of the forces in 1783. He was mustered out of the service in Virginia, and soon after, with the sword which General La Fayette gave him, for a cane, he walked back to his native town.

This sword is still to be seen at his late home in South Salem, N. Y., just over the State line. Mr. Keeler died February, 1853, aged nearly ninety-three years.

The year following this incursion of the enemy, General Putnam was ordered into this part of the State, just across the Redding line, for the winter, and fears of further invasions all subsided.

An incident of his stay we allude to, for the purpose of presenting a picture of army life in that early day, as well as of correcting what seems to be a wrong statement.

It was late in the autumn of 1778 when General Putnam removed his army from White Plains and Peekskill to Redding, at which place he was to establish his head-quarters for the winter. The position thus



selected was in many respects an advantageous one. He was enabled to cover the country adjoining the Sound, and the south-western frontier, and at the same time to support the garrison at West Point, if necessary.

The house which he occupied as his head-quarters is still standing, although in a dilapidated condition, and is situated on the *old* Danbury and Norwalk road, about three miles west of the Congregational church, and is now owned by Mr. Meeker. The north-east room of the same house was also at one time occupied by Joel Barlow, LL.D., who was a native of this town. It was in this room that most of his poetry was written.

General Putnam had, at this time, under his orders, General Poor's New Hampshire brigade, two brigades of Connecticut troops, the corps of infantry commanded by Colonel Hazen, and the corps of cavalry under Colonel Sheldon.

It was while at Redding that the soldiers suffering from the want of proper food and clothing were so strongly tempted to rebel against the authority of their commanding officers, and, if necessary, at the point of the bayonet demand of General Assembly what they esteemed their rights.

We must remember that they were not soldiers by profession, they were simply citizens armed for the defence of their country. They had known and appreciated the endearments of home, and all the domestic enjoyments of life. They were men who had been always accustomed to think independently and speak out their thoughts, without fear or favor. Therefore they were restless under the iron discipline of the

camp and the privations which seemed to them needlessly severe. They were ready to suffer and die, if need be, for their country ; there was no lack of courage or patriotism. No thought of insubordination probably ever entered their minds when actually engaged in battle or in the active duties of military life, but now their time was passing in comparative idleness, and they had abundant leisure to brood over their privations and their gloomy prospects. And as if to fill to overflowing their cup of bitterness, they had thus far been paid off in the depreciated currency of the times, which had proven almost worthless not alone to them, but to their families left in straitened circumstances behind them.

It was under such circumstances that the Connecticut brigades formed the design of marching to Hartford, where the Legislature was then sitting, and demand redress. One of the brigades was actually under arms for this purpose when the news for the first reached the ears of General Putnam. Springing into his saddle, he rode to the cantonment, and thus addressed them:

“ My brave lads, whither are you going ? Do you intend to desert your officers, and to invite the enemy to follow you into the country ? Whose cause have you been fighting and suffering so long in ? Is it not your own ? Have you no property, no parents, wives, or children ? You have behaved like men so far ; all the world is full of your praises ; and posterity will stand astonished at your deeds—but not if you spoil all at last. Don't you consider how much the country is distressed by the war, and that your officers have not been any better paid than yourselves ? But we all expect better times, and that the country will do us ample justice. Let us stand by one another, then, and fight it out like brave soldiers. Think what a shame it would be for Connecticut men to run away from their officers.”

Each regiment received the General with the usual salutations as he rode along the lines. When he had concluded his address, he directed the acting major of brigade to give the word for them to shoulder arms, to march to their regimental parades, and there to lodge their guns. They obeyed with promptness and apparent good-humor. A single soldier only who had been most active in the affair was confined in the quarter-guard, and was shot dead by the sentinel while attempting to escape during the succeeding night.

During Putnam's stay at Redding, two persons were executed—one a soldier, by the name of Smith, who was shot for desertion; the other, a Mr. Jones, of Ridgefield, a royalist, who was hung as a spy; both suffered on the same day. These executions took place on Gallows Hill, a mile or more from General Putnam's head-quarters.

The scene as described by Mr. Barber in his "Historical Collections" is revolting to every feeling of humanity, and degrading to the character of the general in command.

He says, page 399: "The man on whom the duty of hangman devolved, left the camp, and on the day of execution could not be found. A couple of boys, about the age of twelve years, were ordered by General Putnam to perform the duties of the absconding hangman. The gallows was about twenty feet from the ground. Jones was compelled to ascend the ladder, and the rope around his neck was attached to the cross-beam. General Putnam then ordered Jones to jump from the ladder. "No, General Putnam," said Jones, "I am innocent of the crime laid to my charge; I shall not do it." Putnam then ordered the boys

before mentioned to turn the ladder over. The boys were deeply affected by the trying scene; they cried and sobbed loudly, and earnestly entreated to be excused from doing any thing on this distressing occasion. Putnam, drawing his sword, ordered them forward, and compelled them at the sword's point to obey his orders. The soldier that was shot for desertion was but a youth of sixteen or seventeen years of age. Three balls were shot through his breast; he fell on his face, but immediately turned over on his back; a soldier then advanced, and, putting the muzzle of his gun near the convulsive body of the youth, discharged its contents into his forehead. The body was then taken up and put into a coffin. The soldiers had fired their pieces so near that they set the boy's clothing on fire, which continued burning. An officer with a drawn sword stood by, while every soldier of the three brigades which were out on the occasion was ordered to march by and look at the mangled remains."

Mr. Barber says, in a foot-note, that the particulars of the execution of these two persons were derived from an aged inhabitant of Redding, who was present on the occasion, and stood but a few feet from Jones when he was executed.

Mr. Hollister, however, in his "History of Connecticut," does not credit the account given by Mr. Barber. The following note taken from Vol. 2, page 375, will explain itself:

"The Rev. Nathaniel Bartlett, who was Pastor of the Cong<sup>l</sup> church in Redding for a period of fifty years, officiated as chaplain to the encampment during the winter, and was present at the execution. He interceded with Gen. Putnam to defer the execution of Smith until Washington could be consulted—the offender being a youth of seven-

teen years ; but the commander assured him that a reprieve could not be granted.

“ Mr. Bartlett was an earnest and fearless Whig, and openly talked and preached ‘ rebellion ;’ so much so that the Tories, who were numerous in the eastern part of the town, threatened to hang him if they could catch him. In consequence of these threats, he often carried a loaded musket with him when on his parochial visits. His son, and successor in the ministry, at Redding—the Rev. Jonathan Bartlett, now (1855) in his 91st year—well remembers the Revolutionary encampment at Redding, and frequently visited it. He is sure that the story in Barber’s ‘ Historical Collections ’ about Putnam’s inhumanity at the execution of Smith and Jones is incorrect. Though not present himself, he has often heard his father relate the incidents of the occasion ; and, furthermore, he once called the attention of Col. Ashbel Salmon (who died in 1848, aged 91), who was a sergeant in attendance upon the execution, to the statement, and he declared that nothing of the kind took place.”

As further evidence of the incorrectness of Mr. Barber’s statement, we would offer the following extract from the notes of a sermon preached in the Congregational church in Green’s Farms, by Rev. Thomas F. Davies (father of the present Dr. Davies, of Philadelphia), on March 29th, 1839.

Referring to this matter as related by Mr. Barber, he says :

“ Mr. Barber must have been misinformed. Reading is my native town, and from my boyhood I have heard the history of the proceedings on the occasion referred to, and was much surprised at the statements in the ‘ Historical Collections.’ The Rev. Mr. Bartlett, whose father was chaplain on that occasion, informs me that Gen. Putnam could not have been guilty of the acts there charged.

“ That Mr Barber may have something to substitute for the narrative to which I object, I give the following: When Gen. Putnam occupied the house of which Mr. Barber has given an engraving, a scene occurred which presents the general in a very amiable light : A poor man with a family needing support, and who lived in the neighboring town of Ridgefield, was told by one acquainted with his wants that if



he would visit Gen. Putnam and hold a conversation with him, he would, on his return, and on proof of the fact, give him a bushel of wheat. The temptation in that time of scarcity and taxes was great, and so also was the fear of intruding upon so distinguished an individual ; but the stern necessities of his condition at length induced the poor man to venture. He accordingly presented himself at headquarters, and requested the servant to solicit for him an interview with the general. Putnam promptly summoned the man to his presence, directed him to be seated, and listened with interest while the man with great trepidation gave the statement which accounted for the liberty he had taken. The general directed the servant to bring some wine, conversed for a time very pleasantly with his needy visitor, and then calling for pen and ink wrote a certificate, in which he gives the name of the individual, and stated that he had visited and conversed with Gen. Putnam, who signed it in his official character. Thus furnished with the means of giving bread to his family, the distressed individual returned to his humble roof, and this anecdote, which I have on the very best authority, is proof that Putnam was not destitute of those kind and gentle affections which are so desirable an ornament of the most heroic character."

Among the most familiar names in the town a half century ago was that of General Joshua King. He was the father of the present Hon. Joshua I. King, who in 1849 represented the eleventh district in the State Senate, and of the late Rufus H. King, a well-known merchant of Albany.

When General King was but seventeen years of age he enlisted in the regular army, and served with great bravery and fidelity until the close of the war.

At the time of Major Andre's capture, General King (then Lieutenant in the Second Regiment of Light Dragoons, under Colonel Sheldon) was stationed in South Salem. The house which was occupied by Lieutenant King, and which has been but recently removed, stood about one mile north of the Presbyterian Church.



RESIDENCE OF HON. JOSHUA I. KING.





The morning after the capture of Andre, he was brought to Lieutenant King's quarters. Lieutenant King was at the moment being shaved. After his valet had finished the operation and had dressed his hair, Lieutenant King turned to his prisoner and politely inquired if like services would not also be agreeable to him. Lieutenant King did not at the time recognize in Major Andre so distinguished a personage, but was nevertheless impressed with the belief that whatever his rank as a soldier might be, he was at all events a gentleman. His dusty and somewhat rusty garments, his soiled and travel-stained linen could not effectually hide those distinctive marks which always betray refinement and culture.

Major Andre readily accepted the kind offer, and was soon under the careful manipulations of the valet. As soon as the powder began to fly from the prisoner's hair, the Lieutenant was convinced that he was by no means an ordinary man.

After being shaved and having his hair dressed, he courteously asked the privilege of retiring to his bed, that he might have his soiled linen washed. Lieutenant King assured him that such a step would be unnecessary, as he himself would supply him with whatever change he might desire. The Major, with many expressions of gratitude, availed himself of the Lieutenant's hospitality, and soon appeared in a much improved condition. The most friendly relations, consistent with their respective positions, at once sprang up between the two; they walked and talked as inclination led, and at night occupied the same bed.

The Lieutenant and two of his men were detailed to convey Major Andre to head-quarters. While on their

way a despatch informed General King for the first who his illustrious prisoner was; that he was no less a personage than the Adjutant-General of the British Army, that he was suspected of being a spy, and holding a treasonable correspondence with Arnold, for the surrender of West Point. So soon as the message was received, Major Andre eagerly inquired whether Arnold had actually succeeded in making his escape, evincing seemingly more interest in Arnold's safety than in his own.

After they arrived at head-quarters, General King's relations with the prisoner were no less intimate; although closely confined, he remained with him till his execution, even walking with him to the gallows.

In relating the circumstances afterward to a friend, General King said that when Andre first caught sight of the fatal gibbet he gave a sudden start, and exclaimed, "I am reconciled to death, but not to the mode," and added, "it will be but a momentary pang."

On arriving at the spot, the brave and accomplished young officer mounted the cart, adjusted the rope to his neck with his own hands, and paid the penalty of his unsuccessful espionage.

In the year 1817, General King was written to by a friend who desired to know the exact facts in relation to Major Andre's capture, etc. The following letter was written by General King in reply, and although previously solicited for publication, is now for the first given to the public :

" RIDGEFIELD, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1817.

" DEAR SIR : Yours of the 9<sup>th</sup> is before me. I have noted the contents and am sorry to express the indignation I feel at the idea of being



obliged to translate a foreign language to obtain a true history of any part of our revolution. The facts, so far as I am acquainted with them, I will state to the best of my ability or recollection. Paulding, Williams and Van Wort I never saw before, or since, that event, I know nothing about them. The time and place where they stopped Major Andre, seems to justify the character you have drawn of them. The truth is, to the imprudence of the man, and not the patriotism of any one, is to be ascribed the capture of Major Andre. I was the first and only officer who had charge of him whilst at the Headquarters of the 2<sup>d</sup> Regiment of Light Dragoons, which was then at Esquire Gilbert's in South Salem. He was brought up by an adjutant and four men belonging to the Connecticut militia under the command of Lieut Col Jamison from the lines near Tarrytown, a character under the disguised name of John Anderson. He looked somewhat like a reduced gentleman. His small clothes were nankin, with long white top boots, in part, his undress military suit. His coat purple, with gold lace, worn somewhat threadbare, with a small brimmed tarnished beaver on his head. He wore his hair in a *quieu* with long, black, band and his clothes somewhat dirty. In this garb I took charge of him. After breakfast my Barber came in to dress me—after which, I requested *him* to undergo the same operation, which he did.

“When the ribbon was taken from his hair, I observed it full of powder. This circumstance, with others that occurred, induced me to believe I had no ordinary person in charge.

“He requested permission to take the bed, whilst his shirt and small clothes could be washed. I told him, that was needless, for a change was at his service,—which he accepted.

“We were close pent up in a bedroom with a guard at the door and window. There was a spacious yard before the door, which he desired he might be permitted to walk in with me. I accordingly disposed of my guard in such a manner as to prevent an escape. While walking together, he observed, he must make a confidant of somebody and he knew not a more proper person than myself, as I had appeared to befriend a stranger in distress. After settling the point between ourselves, he told me who he was, and gave me a short account of himself from the time he was taken at St. Johns in 1775 to that time. He requested pen and ink and wrote immediately to Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington, declaring who he was. About midnight the express returned with orders from Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington to Col Sheldon to send Major Andre immediately to Headquarters.

“I started with him and before I got to North Salem meeting house

met another express with a letter directed to the Officer who had Major Andre in charge, and which letter directed a circuitous route to Headquarters for fear of re-capture, and gave an account of Arnold's desertion &c—with directions to forward the letter to Col Sheldon. I did so, and before I got to the end of my journey, I was joined by Captain Hoodgers first and after, by Major Talmadge and Captain Rogers. Having given you this clue, I proceed with the major's own story. He said, he came up the North river in the sloop of war Vulture for the purpose of seeing a person by flag of truce. That was not however accomplished. Of course he had to come ashore in a skiff, and after he had done his business, the wind was so high, the Dutchman who took him ashore dare not venture to return him on board. The night following the militia had lined the shore, so that no attempt would be made with safety, consequently he was furnished, after changing his clothes, with a continental horse and General Arnold's pass, and was to take a route by Peekskill, Crumpound, Pinesbridge, Sing Sing, Tarrytown, &c to New York.

“Nothing occurred to disturb him on his route until he arrived at the last place, except at Crumpound. He told me, his hair stood erect and his heart was in his mouth on meeting Col Samuel B. Webb of our army plump in the face. An acquaintance of his said that Col Stodert knew him and he thought that he was gone but they kept moving along and soon passed each other. He then thought himself past all danger and while ruminating on his good luck and hairbreadth escapes, he was assailed by three bushmen near Tarrytown, who ordered him to stand. He said to them, ‘I hope gentlemen you belong to the lower party.’ ‘We do,’ says one. ‘So do I,’ says he, ‘and by the token of this ring and key you will let me pass.’ ‘I am a British officer on business of importance and must not be detained.’ One of them took his watch from him and then ordered him to dismount. The moment that was done, he said he found he was mistaken, he must shift his tone. He says, ‘I am happy gentlemen to find I am mistaken’—‘you belong to the upper party and so do I,’ and to convince you of it here is Genl Arnold's pass, handing it to them. ‘Damn Arnold's pass,’ said they. ‘You said you were a British officer. Where is your money?’ ‘Gentlemen I have none about me,’ he replied. ‘You a British Officer with a gold watch and no money! let us search him.’ They did so, but found none. Says one, ‘He has got his money in his boots, lets have them off and see.’ They took off his boots and there they found his papers, but no money. They then examined his saddle, but found none. He said

he saw they had such a thirst for money, he would put them in the way to get it, if they would be directed by him. He asked them to name their sum to deliver him at King'sbridge. They answered him in this way, 'If we deliver you at King'sbridge, we shall be sent to the sugar-house and you will save your money.' He says, 'If you will not trust my honor, two of you may stay with me and one shall go with the letter I will write, name your sum—the sum was agreed upon, but I cannot recollect whether it was 500 or 1000 guineas but the latter, I think, was the sum. They held a consultation a considerable time and finally they told him if he wrote, a party would be sent out and take them and then they should all be prisoners. They said, 'they had concluded to take him to the commanding Officer, on the lines.' They did so and retained the watch until Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington sent for them to Tappan, when the watch was restored to Major Andre. Thus, you see, had money been at command, after the imprudent confession of Major Andre, or any security given that the British would have put confidence in, he might have passed on to Sir Henry Clinton's Headquarters with all his papers and Arnold's pass into the bargain. I do not recollect to have seen a true statement of this business in any history that has fallen into my hands. If my memory serves me, Arnold solicited and obtained, the command of West Point in consequence of his being an invalid and the reason why his negotiation was not completed by flag of truce, I will state what Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington told the French ambassador, Lucerne. He stated on his route to Hartford, that he dined with Gen<sup>l</sup> Arnold at Haverstraw at Joshua Smith's, where Arnold and Andre met. Gen<sup>l</sup> Arnold shewed him a letter from Gen<sup>l</sup> Robinson directed to Gen<sup>l</sup> Israel Putnam, or Officer commanding West Point requesting an interview by flag on business of the first importance to the United States. Gen<sup>l</sup> Arnold asked Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington if he should go and hear what he had to say, Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington replied that it would be very improper for the Commander in chief of a post to meet anybody himself—he could send a trusty hand if he thought proper. But, he added, I had no more suspicion of Arnold than I had of myself. This accounts for Major Andre's failure to negotiate by flag and his subsequent movements. I have thus complied with your request, giving you such facts, viz, what I had from the mouth of Major Andre and what I heard Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington tell the French minister soon after the execution of Andre."

J. Howard King, Esq., has in his possession the

chair used by Major Andre while a prisoner in the hands of his grandfather, General Joshua King.\*

Major Andre in all probability occupied the chair when he penned his celebrated letter to Washington, for by reference to Irving's "Life of Washington" it will be seen that this letter was written while at South Salem. Then it was that he was for the first made acquainted with the fact that the papers found secreted in his boots had been forwarded to General Washington.

He immediately sat down and wrote the following lines :

"I beg your Excellency will be persuaded that no alteration in the temper of my mind or apprehensions for my safety induces me to take the step of addressing you ; but that it is to secure myself from the imputation of having assumed a mean character for treacherous purposes, or self-interest. It is to vindicate my fame that I speak, and not to solicit security.

"The person in your possession is Major John Andre, Adjutant-general of the British Army.

"The influence of one commander in the army of his adversary is an advantage taken in war. A correspondence for this purpose I held, as confidential (in the present instance) with his Excellency Sir Henry Clinton. To favor it, I agreed to meet upon ground not within the posts of either army, a person who was to give me intelligence. I came up in the Vulture man-of-war for this effect, and was fetched from the shore to the beach. Being there, I was told that the approach of day would prevent my return, and that I must be concealed until the next night. I was in my regimentals and had fairly risked my person.

"Against my stipulation, my intention, and without

\* Through an oversight of the printer, this paragraph was inserted on p. 67 also.



my knowledge beforehand, I was conducted within one of your posts. Thus was I betrayed into the vile condition of an enemy within your posts.

“ Having avowed myself a British officer, I have nothing to reveal but what relates to myself, which is true, on the honor of an officer and a gentleman.

“ The request I have made to your Excellency, and I am conscious that I address myself well, is, that in any rigor policy may dictate, a decency of conduct towards me may mark that, though unfortunate, I am branded with nothing dishonorable ; as no motive could be mine but the service of my king, and as I was involuntarily an impostor.”

It was here also that, having a talent for caricature, he amused himself by making a ludicrous sketch of himself and his rustic escort under march, and presenting it to an officer in the room (probably General King), said gayly : “ This will give you an idea of the style in which I have had the honor to be conducted to my present abode.”

Although it is eminently fitting, it is none the less an illustration of the mysterious manner in which an overruling Providence arranges the affairs of this life, that the *chair* occupied by the illustrious prisoner of General King should, by mere accident seemingly, fall into the hands of his grandson, who a hundred years after the event recorded returns to make for himself a summer home on the exact spot where his grandfather had first resided after his marriage, and within a few miles of the house wherein Major Andre was confined.

The parish of Ridgebury is situated in the northern extremity of the town, and is separated from the village of Ridgefield by a gorge or ravine and a range of rugged hills formerly known as the Asproom ledge.



So distinct and well defined is this dividing line that the two parishes present the appearance of two townships. This is the part of the town heretofore referred to as the New Patent, having been granted the town as part compensation for the *oblong* which was set off to the State of New York.

During the Revolutionary war, a goodly number of the inhabitants of this part of the town took up arms in defence of the country. Upon the approach of the British troops under General Tryon, on Sunday, April 27th, 1777, after the burning of the military stores at Danbury, most of the people fled through the rain that at the time was falling to a hill about one and one half miles north-west of the present Congregational Church.

From their position they could distinctly see the *Regulars*, as they were termed, pass through the village. First came a rude body of Light Horse, then three pieces of cannon, followed by the main body, said to be two thousand strong, with three pieces of cannon in the rear.

As they passed the house of Captain Timothy Benedict, standing on the corner of the road leading to Danbury, they fired two pistol shots at some person looking out at a window, but without doing any harm.

As the Light Horsemen passed through the outskirts of the village on the west they fired at several persons near the New York State line. About 9.30 A.M., and within half an hour after Tryon's departure, Major-General Wooster with a detachment of two hundred men pursued him on the road leading to Ridgefield village.

It appears that a raid had for some weeks been expected, and in consequence of a rumor circulated to that effect on Sunday, April 13th, just two weeks previous, the inhabitants, after secreting many of their valuables in wells and caves, fled with such articles as they could conveniently carry with them to a place of safety on a neighboring hill.

The late Hon. Benjamin Lynes, then a lad of some sixteen years, and a resident of Redding, was taken prisoner by General Tryon, and compelled to accompany him several miles toward Danbury, when, on account of his youth, he was set at liberty.

In September, 1780, General Washington having received a communication from Count de Rochambeau, commander-in-chief of the French forces then at Newport, requesting an interview at Hartford, Ct., he left Verplanck's Point on the Hudson on the 18th of the month, passed through Peekskill, and spent the night in Ridgebury, at the hotel of Ensign Samuel Keeler.

Mrs. Rebecca Boughton, daughter of Daniel Coley, Esq., then about twelve years of age, often spoke of having seen him and his aid on that occasion.

On the 23d of May, 1781, Washington again interviewed Count de Rochambeau. This time at Wethersfield, Ct., for the purpose of settling upon a definite plan of campaign. It is probable that at this interview arrangements were made to remove the French army to a point in the State near the York State line, so that they could at short notice join the American army; for during the following month, Rochambeau and Duke de Lauzun (Lauzun-Biron) marched from

Newport across the State of Connecticut and took post at Ridgebury.

During their stay in Ridgebury the main body of Rochambeau's army encamped on the ridge just east of the main street, on land now owned by Samuel S. St. John, Esq. One division took post on a hill about one mile south of the church near the school-house. At this point the army was about equally distant from Long Island Sound and the Hudson River. Count de Rochambeau and suite are said to have made their head-quarters at Ensign Keeler's hotel.

Several carts loaded with specie were placed under a strong guard, on the premises and near the dwelling of Daniel Coley, Esq., midway between the two divisions. The supplies for the whole French army were transported in carts—810 in number—most of them drawn by two pairs of oxen and a horse, then designated as a five-cattle team.

The late Thomas Boughton, at that time too young to join the regular army, hired as teamster to the French, driving his father's team. He accompanied the supply train from Connecticut to Virginia, and was present at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. In after years he often spoke of the magnificent display made by Rochambeau's army on that occasion.

On the 2d of July, 1781, Duke de Lauzun left his encampment, and marched his forces to East Chester, N. Y., where he arrived on the morning of the 3d, his purpose being the capture or destruction of Delancy's corps of refugees at Morrisania.

Count de Rochambeau, with the main body of his army, probably broke camp at Ridgebury on the 4th

of July, 1781, as they joined General Washington at Dobb's Ferry on the 6th.

A liberty-pole erected by the Whigs about the commencement of the war was in the night cut down by the Tories. This exasperated the former, who at once raised another, filling it for several feet with spikes and pieces of old iron, to protect it against a similar disaster. About the year 1860 some two feet of this pole was dug up by William M. Lynes, Esq. It was in a fair state of preservation and still contained many of its iron protectors.

During the war several families residing in Ridgebury improved every opportunity to aid King George in his efforts to subdue the colonies, or, in other and plainer words, were Tories.

In some instances they converted their cellars into places of concealment and security, where such as had made themselves particularly obnoxious to the Whigs by their loyalty to the Crown could be safely secreted.

These hiding-places were approached by trap-doors made in the floor beneath beds. Through these doors the occupant was supplied with food by the less objectionable Tories. In some instances they were arrested by the government officers and imprisoned. One went back to England, but returned after the war, and was supported and buried at the expense of the town,

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE Congregational Church was the first Christian organization of the town. Under date of October, A.D. 1712, the following act of General Assembly, then convened in Hartford, is recorded :

“ Upon the petition of the Inhabitants of the Town of Ridgefield requesting that the charges for the maintenance of the ministry in the said Town of Ridgefield, may be levied in equal proportion upon all the lands belonging to the several proprietors in the said Town,

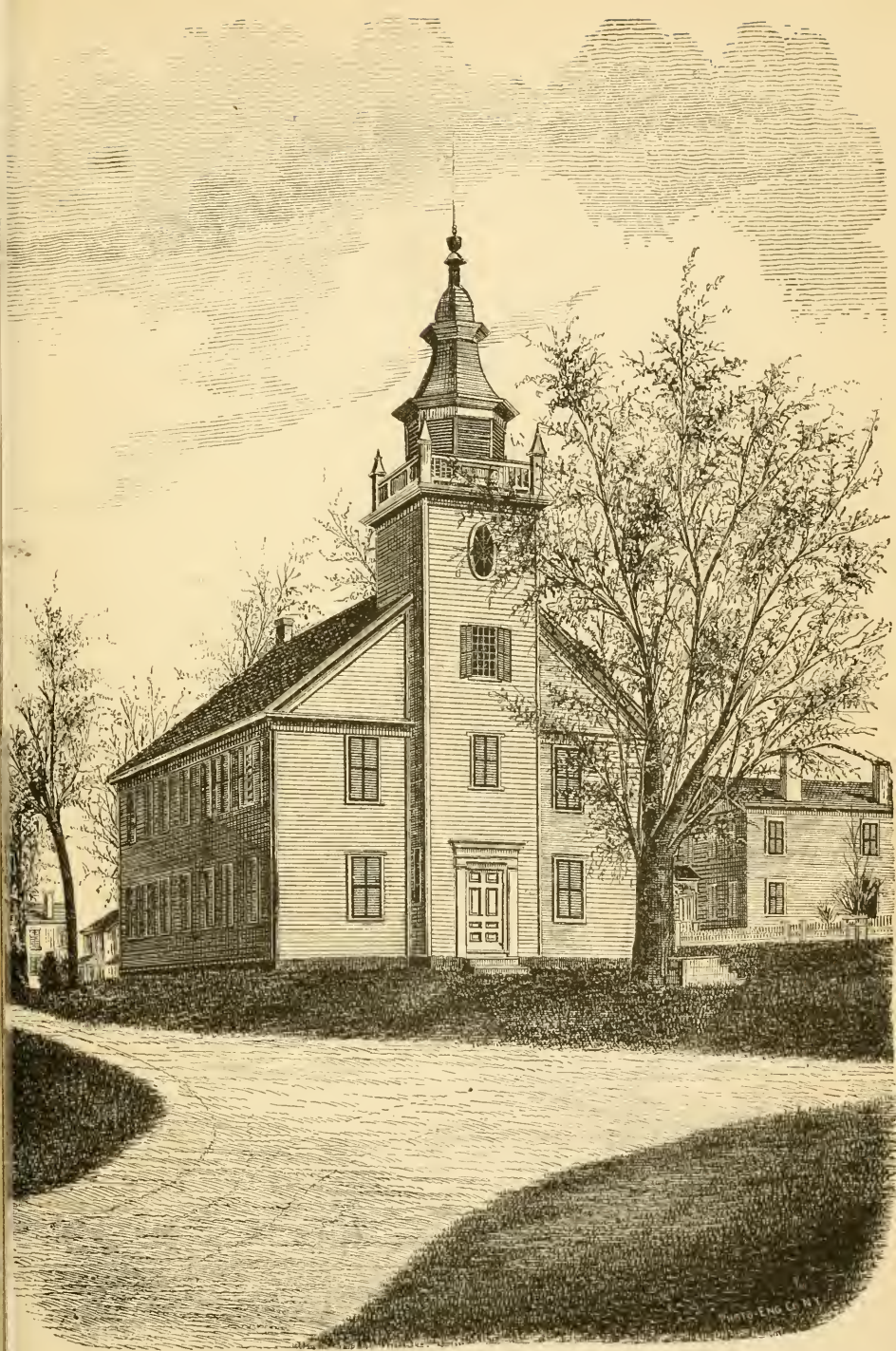
“ This Assembly order that all the lands lying in the Township of Ridgefield be taxed in proportion for four years, towards the settling and maintaining of the ministry in the said Town of Ridgefield.”

As early as the year 1713, the Rev. Thomas Hawley, of Northampton, had come to the young settlement as a preacher of the Gospel. There were doubtless others who had preceded him as occasional supplies, but as the earliest records of the church were destroyed many years ago, the names of such and their terms of service are lost.

In the year 1714, General Assembly granted “ unto the Inhabitants of the Town of Ridgefield to imbody into Church Estate and settle an orthodox minister among them.”

Rev. Thomas Hawley was probably formally settled over the church as its pastor in the same year, and continued his labors among them until the time of his





CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



death, which occurred on the 8th of November, 1738, in the forty-ninth year of his age. Mr. Hawley was a graduate of Harvard College, and the ancestor of the families of the same name, so well known in the town. He held for a number of years many of the important offices of the town, and gained a reputation for energy and ability, originating and directing many of the enterprises of the early settlers.

The year following the death of Mr. Hawley, Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll, a native of Stratford, Ct., was invited to settle in the gospel ministry. This invitation Mr. Ingersoll accepted, and was duly installed on the 8th of August, 1739. Previous to coming to Ridgefield he resided for some time in Newark, N. J., and was licensed by the Presbytery of New Jersey at Elizabethtown, February 15th, 1738.

At the meeting of the Western Consociation, Fairfield County, which installed Mr. Ingersoll, there were present the following ministers :

Rev. Robert Sturgeon, Rev. Moses Dickinson, Rev. Ebenezer Wright, Rev. John Goodsell, Rev. Ephraim Bostwick, Rev. William Gaylord.

Delegates : From Bedford, Captain Jonathan Miller ; Norwalk, John Copp, Esq. ; Stamford, Abraham Davenport ; Greenfield, Benjamin Banks ; Wilton, Benjamin Hickox, Esq. ; Green's Farms, Samuel Couch, Esq.

Rev. Mr. Goodsell offered the first prayer and gave the right hand of fellowship. Rev. Mr. Dickinson preached the sermon and offered the prayer of ordination. Rev. Mr. Sturgeon gave the charge, and Rev. Mr. Todd, who had been invited to sit with the council, offered the closing prayer.

Mr. Ingersoll was a graduate of Yale College, and a man of a fine mind and a good heart. He served the church with great faithfulness until his death, which occurred October 2d, 1778, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

In the year 1758, Mr. Ingersoll joined the Colonial troops as chaplain, on Lake Champlain. He is said to have exerted an excellent influence in the army, and to have been highly respected by the soldiers. A letter written on the eve of his departure for the army, to his brother, Hon. R. I. Ingersoll, of New Haven, indicates clearly the temper and spirit of the man :

“ RIDGEFIELD, June 9th, A.D. 1738.

“ DEAR BROTHER :

“ Yours from Hartford, the 1st instant, came safe to hand by Mr. Olmstead, for which I am heartily obliged to you. I remarked in particular, your observing something of heaviness in my countenance at parting with you, at New Haven—upon which I would observe that this bidding farewell is a difficult thing, and tends greatly to move the passions. This sin being a natural infirmity, you will easily overlook. Blessed be God, I am neither disheartened nor elevated, but enjoy a good temper of mind, and can, I think, put my life in the hands of God and go forth freely and cheerfully, in so important though dangerous an enterprise. I have this day received a line from Colonel Wooster, by which I am informed that I must be at Norwalk to-morrow in order to embark for Albany. I am ready, and rejoice at the news. He also informs me that you are appointed agent, and have accepted, at which I greatly rejoice, and hope your courage will hold out, and desire that you will be made a blessing to your country and government in this important undertaking. The office is very honorable, and I hope will be profitable to you and the government. By no



means refuse, but look upon it as a favor of Providence. To love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves, is the great gospel command. And to be impressed in such an important affair, must be looked upon as a favor from Heaven ; for the voice of the people (to judge rationally) is the voice of God, when they look to him for his influence and direction.

“ Your family need you and desire you, and so does mine me ; but private matters must submit to the public good. Sister, I hope, will quietly acquiesce—from a view of your usefulness, though it be a piece of great self-denial. I could wish you had had the small-pox—a terror to the world, and perhaps it would be best to go to Doctor Munson on Long Island, and inoculate—and was I not going abroad as I am, I would go and be with you. With respect to cautions and advice you give, I accept them well, and would give the same to you. And so, my brother, go in the fear of God—be true to your trust, and farewell. Whether we see each other in this life or not, let us labor to meet in glory.

“ I remain your affectionate brother,

“ JONATHAN INGERSOLL.

“ P. S.—We are all well. Send our compliments, particularly our love to Dorcas, and tell her to live in the fear of God.”

Mr. Hawley and Mr. Ingersoll were buried in the Titicus Cemetery. The stones which mark their graves bear the following inscriptions :

HERE LYES BURIED  
THE BODY OF Y<sup>e</sup> REV.  
THOMAS HAULEY  
PASTOR OF Y<sup>e</sup> CHURCH  
AT RIDGEFIELD  
NOV. Y<sup>e</sup> 8, 1738  
AGED 42 YEARS.



IN MEMORY  
OF THE REV.  
JONATHAN INGERSOLL PASTOR  
OF Y<sup>e</sup> 1ST CHURCH IN RIDGEFIELD  
WHO DECEASED OCT. 2. A.D.  
1778 IN Y<sup>e</sup> 65. YEAR OF HIS  
AGE, & 40<sup>th</sup> OF HIS MINISTRY.

After the death of Mr. Ingersoll, there seems to have been a vacancy of eight years, during which time the pulpit was in part supplied by Rev. Justice Mitchell, who, in January, 1783, was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church of New Canaan, and in part by Rev. Izrahiah Wetmore and Rev. — Everitt, as the following receipts will show :

“ RIDGEFIELD, Dec. 27, 1781.

“ Rec<sup>d</sup> of the Gentl<sup>n</sup> the Societys Committee Nine Bushels of Wheat being in full for nine Dollars sent Parson Everitt.  
PETER BYVANCK.”

“ RIDGEFIELD, Oct. y<sup>e</sup> 5th, 1786.

“ Pay the Rev<sup>d</sup> Izrahiah Wetmore Twenty Seven pounds Eleven Shillings, and four pence Lawfull Money on Demand with Interest at Six per cent per annum for which this is our order.

“ SOCIETYS COMMITTEE.

“ To BENJAMIN SMITH Treasurer of the first Society in Ridgefield.”

On the 6th of July, 1786, Rev. Samuel Goodrich, of Durham, of this State, was ordained and installed as pastor of the church. The services on this occasion are said to have been of unusual interest. The father of the newly settled pastor preached the sermon and gave the charge, both to his son and the church. The venerable appearance of the aged, gray-haired father was in striking contrast with the youthful and almost boyish

appearance of the son. It was age and experience counselling youth and inexperience. It was a man of God, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and was ready to depart, casting his mantle upon the shoulders of another just entering upon the work.

Mr. Goodrich served the church as its pastor for upwards of twenty-five years. He was dismissed January 22d, 1811, at his own request, and on the 29th of May, 1811, he was installed at Worthington, a parish in the town of Berlin, in this State. He was the father of Samuel G. Goodrich, the renowned Peter Parley, whose sketch of Ridgefield, written in 1855, we have given to our readers. Mr. Goodrich also was the author of a manuscript history of the town, which was written and lodged in the library of the Athenæum at Hartford, in the year 1800, extracts from which we have also given.

The labors of Mr. Goodrich were eminently blessed, and the church during his ministry enjoyed many seasons of revival, and large additions were made to it.

Mr. Goodrich was for several years a Trustee of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, and a Director of the Connecticut Bible Society, in both of which he manifested a warm interest.

His last sermon was preached at Woodbury, Ct., and the impression then made, under a religious excitement among the people, is thought to have been long remembered.

His last sickness was short, and as the disease early affected the brain he was favored with but few lucid intervals ; but during those he manifested a full knowledge of his danger and a willingness to depart and be with Christ.

The conversation which passed between his son, the Rev. Charles A. Goodrich, and himself, a short time before his death, evinces the clearness of his faith and his perfect reliance upon God's promises.

His son asked him if he was aware that his case was becoming critical. He replied that he understood that this was the opinion of his physician.

"And in view of a speedy departure, do you feel resigned?" the son inquired.

"I think so," he replied.

"Father," continued his son, "you have preached the gospel many years, are you willing to die by that gospel?"

"Certainly," said he.

"Can you say, with the Psalmist, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil?"

"Yes," said the father, and himself added, extending the quotation, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

"There is yet one question more I would ask, father," said the son. "Your parishioners will wish to know, and especially your children, whether, in the prospect of a speedy death, your faith in a crucified Redeemer is firm and unwavering?"

"My son," replied he, as if he wondered why the question should be asked, "my soul, I trust, is on the rock of ages, and my confidence in God is as firm as the everlasting mountains."

Mr. Goodrich died at Berlin, Ct., April 19th, 1835, aged seventy-two years.

After the dismissal of Mr. Goodrich, the church was again destitute of a settled pastor for several years.

Rev. Jonathan Bartlett supplied the pulpit from 1811 to 1814, and was succeeded by Rev. John Noyes, who supplied from 1814 to 1817.

During Mr. Bartlett's ministry, he proposed to the society to raise a fund, the annual income of which should be appropriated for the support of the preaching of the gospel, and, as an encouragement to the undertaking, he generously gave to the society the sum of fifty dollars. As the result of this effort the permanent fund of the society at the present time is about \$8000.

On the 2d of February, 1817, the church invited the Rev. Samuel M. Phelps to become their pastor, and consociation was convened on the 20th day of March following, for the purpose of his installation. For reasons which do not appear upon the church records, the consociation refused to install him ; whereupon, on the 24th day of March, the church seceded from the consociation of the Western District of Fairfield County, and with the society invited a body of ministers from the Westchester Presbytery to install him over said church and society. That body met in the month of June following, and Mr. Phelps was by them regularly installed as their minister, according to the usages and customs of said Presbytery. Mr. Phelps continued his labors here until the month of December, 1829, when he was by the members of the Presbytery aforesaid regularly dismissed, and his ministry in this place ceased.

The church, at a regular meeting held on the 31st day of March, 1831, with great unanimity rescinded their vote of secession passed February 24th, 1817, and became reunited to the consociation of the Western Dis-

trict of Fairfield County, and on the same day they invited the Rev. Charles G. Selleck, of Darien, to become their pastor, and he was ordained and installed on the 25th day of May, 1831. Mr. Selleck's ministry continued until the 6th day of September, 1837. The most perfect harmony existed between the church and society and Mr. Selleck during the whole period of his ministry. At his special request (believing he was called by Providence to minister to the Presbyterian Church in Alton, Ill.), he was regularly dismissed by consociation.

During Mr. Selleck's ministry, the church enjoyed three precious seasons of religious interest—viz., in 1831, '32, and '33, and as the fruits thereof about one hundred and eighty persons were added to the church.

Mr. Selleck is still living. A few years since, at an advanced age, he removed to Florida and made for himself a home, where he still resides.

On the 18th of January, 1838, the church and society invited the Rev. Joseph Fuller to settle among them, and on the 27th of February following the consociation met, and Mr. Fuller was regularly installed as their pastor.

His ministry continued about four years, in which time the church enjoyed another season of revival, and about sixty persons united with it. On the 17th of May, 1842, by the united request of Mr. Fuller and the church, the consociation met, and Mr. Fuller was dismissed from his pastoral charge.

After the dismissal of Mr. Fuller, the church was without a settled pastor for seventeen months, during which time the pulpit was regularly supplied, and an interesting work of grace ensued, by which about



twenty, mostly young persons, united themselves to the church by profession.

On the 18th of September, 1843, the church and society, each by unanimous votes, extended to the Rev. James A. Hawley a call to become their pastor, which call he accepted, and on the 25th of October following he was regularly installed as such.

Mr. Hawley's connection as pastor continued until November 5th, 1849, when at his request he was dismissed by consociation. During the years 1845 and 1848 the church enjoyed seasons of revival, and as the fruits thereof about forty persons were added to it.

Believing that the best interests of the church would be secured by having a settled pastor, the church and society with marked unanimity, on the 6th of May, 1850, extended to the Rev. Clinton Clark a call to settle among them. The call was accepted, and Mr. Clark was duly installed June 5th, 1850.

Mr. Clark's connection as pastor of this church continued nearly fourteen years, or until April 5th, 1864, at which time he was dismissed, and soon after entered upon the duties of acting pastor of the Congregational Church of Middlebury, Ct., where he died September 23d, 1871.

During Mr. Clark's ministry in Ridgefield, one hundred and fifteen persons united with the church, of whom seventy-six were by profession. In consideration of his long-continued services, the church, by resolution, extended to him "our most grateful acknowledgment and heartfelt thanks for all his labors among us, and that it is with deep regret that we part with one who has so long and faithfully discharged his duty to us in all the ministerial relations."

Mr. Clark was a graduate of Amherst College. He was a man of sound mind and fervent piety. He is buried in the cemetery at Ridgefield, in the midst of the people whom he so faithfully served.

After the dismissal of Mr. Clark, the pulpit was supplied by various clergymen until the fall of 1865, when the Rev. Samuel G. Coe, then recently dismissed from the First Congregational Church in Danbury, Ct., removed to Ridgefield as a place of residence.

He was invited to supply the pulpit, and soon after received a unanimous call to settle. He, however, preferred to labor with them without being formally installed. His wishes in this respect were acceded to, and he continued to serve the church until the autumn of 1868, when failing health induced him to give up active pastoral work.

Mr. Coe was a graduate of Yale College, of Yale Law School and of Yale Theological Seminary. He was a clear thinker and an earnest and eloquent preacher.

He died on the 7th of December, 1869, universally lamented.

The Rev. Pliny S. Boyd was called by the church and society to settle. He accepted the call, and was installed May 11th, 1869. Mr. Boyd was dismissed July 1st, 1871, and soon after was settled over the Congregational Church of Amesbury, Mass.

The church was supplied with regular preaching by various clergymen, until February 1st, 1872, when the Rev. Daniel W. Teller was called to become the acting pastor of the church by unanimous vote.

Three years later, Mr. Teller was invited to be formally settled over the church, but preferred serving as

he had-already done as acting pastor. He is still serving the church in that capacity. The church at present has two hundred and twenty-five members : males, eighty-three ; females, one hundred and forty-two.

The first house used for religious meetings by the Congregationalists was a small building standing nearly in front of the residence of Miss Mary Hawley. It was used also as a school-house, and as a place at which to transact town business, previous to the erection of the town-house.

On the 19th of December, 1723, the following vote was passed in town meeting :

“ Voted unanimously that a meeting house shall be built.

"Test.      THOMAS HAWLEY,  
                              "*Register.*"

“ At the meeting above said, it was voted unanimously that the magnitude and proportion of the Meeting-house above said shall be thirty-four feet wide ; on the ground forty feet long, and twenty-eight feet between the sill and the plate.

“Test. THOMAS HAWLEY,  
“*Register.*”

This house stood immediately east of the present building or where the road now passes it.

In the year 1765, the building of the present house began for the first to be seriously considered, as will appear from the following minutes :

“ Dec 25<sup>th</sup> 1765. Adjourned to Jany 1<sup>st</sup> 1766. The Meeting Resolved (5-6<sup>th</sup>) to Build a New Meeting House within y<sup>e</sup> Limits of this Society ; & appointed W. L ; S. O ; B. S ; S S ; & I I. a comt<sup>ee</sup> to apply to y<sup>e</sup> County Court to fix a place & granted a one penny Tax to defray y<sup>e</sup> Charge of fixing y<sup>e</sup> place,”

“Dec 25<sup>th</sup> 1767. Question put would y<sup>e</sup> Society Build a Meeting at y<sup>e</sup> place fixed by y<sup>e</sup> County Comt<sup>ee</sup>? Resolved in y<sup>e</sup> neg; by a great majority—Question put would they Build in y<sup>e</sup> Meeting House yard. Resolved in y<sup>e</sup> aff. by more than 2 to 1.”

“Dec 19<sup>th</sup> 1769. Voted that y<sup>e</sup> County Comt<sup>ee</sup> be called out to fix a place to build a Meeting house on.”

“Jany 16<sup>th</sup> 1770. Question put, are y<sup>e</sup> meeting willing y<sup>e</sup> stake set in y<sup>e</sup> yard be established. Voted in y<sup>e</sup> aff. 36 to 30.”

“Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 1770. Voted that y<sup>e</sup> old meeting-house may be repaired by subscription.”

“May 1<sup>st</sup> 1771. Voted to build a House 58 feet long & 40 feet broad, & 24 feet posts & a steeple,—Also Sam<sup>l</sup>. Smith Esq Samuel Olmsted Esq & Jn<sup>o</sup> Benedict were chosen a Comt<sup>ee</sup> to take y<sup>e</sup> care of & proceed in Building s<sup>d</sup> House during y<sup>e</sup> pleasure of y<sup>e</sup> Society”—Also granted a Tax of 6<sup>d</sup> on y<sup>e</sup> £ on y<sup>e</sup> List 1770 to enable said Comt<sup>ee</sup> to proceed in building s<sup>d</sup> house—Also that y<sup>e</sup> Roof of y<sup>e</sup> House & Steeple be covered with cedar & y<sup>e</sup> sides with sawed Siding.”

“June 3<sup>d</sup> 1771. Voted that if £50 be subscribed by y<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> of July next, then the Comt<sup>ee</sup> to build a steeple, if not to drop it.”

“Aug<sup>t</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 1771. Voted to Raise y<sup>e</sup> House Gratis—if cant be done to hire help. Also that they will continue y<sup>e</sup> Comt<sup>ee</sup> already appointed to proceed in building y<sup>e</sup> House. Also voted that y<sup>e</sup> House be set in y<sup>e</sup> yard, provided the County Court will establish a place there.”

“Sept 19<sup>th</sup> 1771. Question, Shall the Timber be raised within five feet west of y<sup>e</sup> old house & shall not y<sup>e</sup> Tax of 6<sup>d</sup> be revoked? Passed in y<sup>e</sup> aff.”

“Dec 18<sup>th</sup> 1783. Benj<sup>n</sup> Smith & Capt David Olmsted were chosen Committee men in addition to y<sup>e</sup> Comt<sup>ee</sup> chosen in May 1771 to superintend y<sup>e</sup> Building of the Meeting House in said Society.”

The house was not completed until the early part of

the year 1800. Then it was seated in the following manner and the seats occupied as indicated :

14	13	12	11	Pulpit Deacons	10	9	8	7
15	29	28			22	23		6
	30	27			21	24		5
16	31	26			20	25		4
	17	18	19		No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	

A draught of the Pews, Seats & Ailes on y<sup>e</sup> ground floor of the Meeting House in y<sup>e</sup> first Society Numbered with the names of the original Proprietors, & the present owners, March y<sup>e</sup> 22<sup>d</sup> A.D. 1800.

No. 1.	Phillip B Bradley	James Olmsted
" 2.	Thomas Hawley	Jere <sup>h</sup> Mead
	Nathan Smith	Matthew Olmsted
" 3.	James Reseguie	No. 5. Dan <sup>l</sup> Smith
	Seth Bouton	Tho <sup>s</sup> Hyatt
	Ambrose Barnes	Benj <sup>n</sup> Sherwood
" 4.	Eben Olmsted	" 6. Thad <sup>s</sup> Keeler



	Jere <sup>h</sup> Keeler	No. 19.	Benj <sup>n</sup> Smith
	Benj <sup>n</sup> Keeler		Amos Baker
No. 7.	Stephen Smith	" 20.	Amos Smith
" 8.	Eben Hawley		Josiah Smith
	Elisha Hawley		Thad <sup>s</sup> Smith
" 9.	Tim <sup>o</sup> Keeler	" 21.	Jasper Mead
	Nathan Dauchey		Matthew Keeler
" 12.	Bradly Hull		Jonah Keeler
	Jere <sup>h</sup> Keeler	" 22.	Thad <sup>s</sup> Keeler
	Ward Sturgis		Dr N Perry
" 13.	David Scott	" 24.	Joshua King
	James Scott 2 <sup>d</sup>		Moss Ingersol
	Jere Scott	" 25.	Sam <sup>l</sup> Olmsted
" 14.	Dan <sup>l</sup> Lee		Jared Olmsted
	Wakeman Burrett		Newton Hine
	Nehemiah Banks	" 26.	Nathan F Kellogg
" 15.	Sam <sup>l</sup> Hoyt		James Sturgis
	Josiah Northrop		Jacob Jones
	Nathaniel Seymour	" 27.	David Olmsted
" 16.	Uriah Marvin		Timothy Olmsted
	Dan <sup>l</sup> Olmsted 2 <sup>d</sup>		Benj <sup>n</sup> Sanford
	Timothy Bouton	" 30.	Matthew Seymour
" 17.	Levi Keeler		Thomas Scott
	John Keeler		Jared Northrop
	Jere <sup>h</sup> Seymour		Daniel Smith 2 <sup>d</sup>
	Paul Keeler	" 31.	John Waterous
" 18.	Dea <sup>n</sup> Jn <sup>o</sup> Benedict		Joseph Benedict
	& family		

18	Front seat reserved for musicians. 2 seat.		Front seat reserved for musicians. 2 seat.		No. 1	
17						2
16						3
15						4
14						5
13	Front seat reserved for musicians. 2 seat.	Ye front seat reserved for the musicians.	Front seat reserved for musicians. 2 seat.	6		
		2 seat front.				
		Aile.				
		12				
		11				
	10					
	9					
	8					
	7					

A Plan of the Pews, Seats & Ailes in the Gallorys in the Meeting House, in the first Society with the names of the original pewholders & present Proprietors, March 22<sup>d</sup> A.D. 1800.

Pew.	Name.	Pew.	Name.
No. 2.	Levi Keeler		Millicent Smith
	Hezekiah Smith		N G Smith
" 4.	Stephen Mills		Thomas Hawley
" 6.	Michael Warren	No. 9.	John Benedict
	Jabez Keeler		Jared Olmsted
" 7.	Dan <sup>l</sup> Lee		Dan <sup>l</sup> Smith
	Wakeman Burret		Job Smith
" 8.	Nathan Smith	" 10.	Tim <sup>o</sup> Keeler
	David Olmsted		Benj <sup>n</sup> Smith

Pew.	Name.	Pew.	Name.
	Amos Baker	No. 15.	Moss Ingersoll
No. 11.	P B Bradley		Joseph Stebbins
	Col King	" 16.	Samuel Dykeman
" 12.	Matthew Keeler	" 17.	David Saintjohn
	Jonah Keeler		Jonoth <sup>n</sup> Gilbert
	Jasper Mead		Sam <sup>l</sup> Hoyt 2 <sup>d</sup>
	Jesse Benedict	" 18.	Elisha Hawley
" 14.	Tho Hyatt		Eben Hawley
	John Mills		John Waterous

"The foregoing draughts were made by us the Subscribers being appointed a Committee for the purpose this 22<sup>d</sup> day of March. A.D. 1800

BENJN SMITH	} <i>Committee."</i>
TIMOTHY KEELER	
NATHAN SMITH	

The following will indicate how these seats were bought and sold :

" RIDGEFIELD Jany 1<sup>st</sup>, A.D. 1801

" Be it known that I Nathan F Kellogg do for the consideration of Two Dollars & Fifty Cents Rec<sup>d</sup> of Eanos Tuttle, Sell, convey & convert unto him the s<sup>d</sup> Tuttle one Twelfth part of my Pew on the lower Flour in the Meeting House No 26

	NATHAN F KELLOGG
Test	NATHAN SMITH, <i>Clerk.</i> "

" Know all by these presents that I David Olmsted of Ridgefield for the consideration of Three Dollars Received of Thomas H. Rockwell of s<sup>d</sup> Ridgefield to my full Satisfaction do Quit Claim to him the s<sup>d</sup> Thomas all my Right title & Interest I have in a pew in the Galery of the Meeting House in s<sup>d</sup> Ridegfield

No 8 witness my hand this 27<sup>th</sup> day of May A.D.  
1800

*Witness* Jasper Mead                      DAVID OLMSTED  
John Keeler.

Test              NATHAN SMITH *Society Clerk.*''

“To all People to whom these presents shall come Greeting. Know ye that we Timothy Keeler. Timothy Olmsted. & Jonathan Keeler. Society's Comt<sup>ee</sup> for the first Society in Ridgefield in Fairfield County (do agreeable to the direction of s<sup>d</sup> society) for Selling the Pews in the Gallery of the Meeting House, do by these Presents Give. Grant. Bargain & Sell Thaddeus Keeler & Jeremiah Mead of s<sup>d</sup> Ridgefield the South East corner Pew on the South end of the Gallery in Said Meeting House for the consideration of Nine Dollars & Eighty Four Cents, to have & to hold the above Granted & Bargained Premises as their own forever as witness our hand in Ridgefield this 4<sup>th</sup> day of December A.D. 1801

TIMOTHY KEELER }  
TIMOTHY OLMSTED } *Societys Comt<sup>ee</sup>.*  
JONATHAN KEELER }

Test              NATHAN SMITH  
*Society Clerk.*''

The steeple at first erected above the church was observed, after a few years, to be leaning toward the main building. In the year 1815 the following call for a Society's meeting was issued :

“ Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Presbyterian Society in the first Society in Ridgefield will be holden at the Meeting House on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Oct at 1 O'clock in the P.M. for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of taking down the

Steeple of said House and of making provision for necessary repairs

MATHEW KEELER	}	<i>Committee.</i>
JEREMIAH KEELER		
———— BRADLEY		

“ RIDGEFIELD, CT., Oct. 3, 1815.”

The steeple was deemed unsafe, and therefore taken down, and two years afterward, in the year 1817, the present one was erected.

In the first attempt to set up the new steeple, an accident occurred which was attended with great danger to all who were present. The posts were nearly in place, when the iron hook to which the pulleys were attached broke, and the whole framework fell to the ground.

The only damage sustained was the breaking of one of the posts. This was spliced by iron bands, and the next day it was set up and secured.

The following papers may be of interest to the curious :

“ Jany. 21<sup>st</sup> 1811.

To first Society of Ridgefield to Timothy Keeler	Dr.
To 20 dinners p <sup>r</sup> the Consociation at 37½ cts..	\$7 50
To 4 do p <sup>r</sup> the Com <sup>ty</sup> “ “ “ “ ..	1 50
To bating 18 horses “ “ 8cts ....	1 44
To keeping 3 horses one night “ 25 cts.....	75
To Liquor &c.....	3 00
	<hr/>
	\$14 19”

“ RIDGEFIELD, Dec 6<sup>th</sup>, 1803.

“ Received of Timothy Keeler Societies Treasurer the Sum of Twenty Dollars and Sixty five cents in full of



all dues and demands against the first Society of s<sup>d</sup> Ridgefield for getting the Bell new-cast.

NATHAN SMITH, in behalf of the Bell Comt<sup>ee</sup>."

"Rec<sup>d</sup> of the Societies Comtt<sup>ee</sup> three Dollars & fifty five cents in full for sweeping meeting House the year past p<sup>r</sup>. me

JOHN KEELER.

"RIDGEFIELD Dec 5<sup>th</sup>, 1800."

"To TIMOTHY KEELER ESQ. *Societies Treasurer*

"Sir, Pay James Scott Twenty one Shillings and three pence for furnishing flax and making a rope for the Church Bell.

*Societies Committee.*"

"This may certify that I the subscriber am willing to teach singing in the Presbyterian Society in Ridgefield, and sing as often as may be judged necessary by the Committee from 3 to 6 months in the year on the Sabbath evening at one Dollar per evening including the Sabbath, and also to attend regularly on the Sabbath at all other times throughout the year (sickness &c excepted) for twenty five cts per day for taking the lead in singing.

HARVEY BETTS

"RIDGEFIELD Dec 27<sup>th</sup> 1827."

The present church building was altered and repaired in 1833, when the whole interior work, including galleries and pulpit, was taken out, and so arranged as to present the appearance of an entirely new house.

The church thus repaired was renewedly dedicated to God in the month of June, 1834. The dedication sermon was preached by Rev. Joel Mann, from Haggai 2:9: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts."

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered on this occasion. The services were solemn, and were rendered peculiarly interesting by the presence of the Rev. and venerable Samuel Goodrich, the former beloved pastor of the church, who was providentially present, and assisted in the services.

In the summer of 1841 the exterior of the edifice was thoroughly repaired and several important additions and alterations were made. Subsequently a new bell, a new pulpit and its surroundings, and an organ have added their attractions to this more than centenary building, still a work of strength, and giving promise of a long future as a sanctuary of the Most High.





ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH.

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.”—*Ps.* 26 : 8.

“Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?”—*Zech.* 1 : 5.

THE foundation of the Episcopal Church in Ridgefield was laid by the Rev. Samuel Johnson of Stratford, the first clergyman of the Church in Connecticut, who preached here occasionally for several years, and was instrumental in bringing several families into the Church. He began his services here about 1725. He was succeeded by the two brothers, Henry Caner, of Fairfield, and Richard Caner, of Norwalk; also by the Rev. John Beach, of Newtown, and Rev. James Wetmore, of Rye, until about the year 1744.

In the year 1728 the Rev. Henry Caner reported several small parishes, or missionary stations, beyond the bounds of his proper care, one of which was Ridgefield, with twelve families.

The Rev. John Beach, missionary at Newtown, reported to the Society in London, “that he often officiated and administered the sacraments in Ridgefield, distant from his residence about eighteen miles, where, in 1735, there were nearly twenty families of very serious and religious people, who had a just esteem of the Church of England, and desired to have the opportunity of worshipping God in that way.”



The Rev. Joseph Lamson, assistant to the Rev. James Wetmore, of Rye, officiated at Ridgefield in 1744, in connection with Bedford and North Castle, until his removal to Fairfield, in 1747, where he still continued to serve the Church in Ridgefield, as far as can be ascertained, until 1762. He was succeeded by the Rev. Richard S. Clark, of Salem, about 1764, who held services in connection with Salem and Ridgebury.

In the year 1768 the Rev. Epenetus Townsend took the charge of services in Ridgefield, in connection with Salem and Ridgebury, and so continued until 1776, when, after the Declaration of Independence, he left and was appointed chaplain to one of the loyal battalions then stationed in New York, and in 1779 the battalion was ordered to Halifax, Nova Scotia. He embarked from New York with his wife and five children in one of the vessels. A severe storm arose soon after leaving New York, and the vessel in which he embarked was foundered in Boston Bay, and every soul on board perished.

All of the clergy of the Church who ministered here previous to the American Revolution were missionaries of the "Society (in England) for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," and received annual stipend toward their maintenance. The Rev. Mr. Townsend, as well as other missionaries, received an annuity of twenty pounds sterling, in addition to the tax raised among his people for his support.

As far as ascertained, an interval of about thirteen years passed by before the resumption of regular services by a clergyman of the Church.

The following, among others, are from the records of the town of Ridgefield :

March 29. 1738. Received of the Members of the Church of England in Ridgefield, the whole of their Ministerial Taxes for the year 1737.

“Received per me, JOHN BEACH *Missionary*.

“A true copy of original Receipt,  
TIMOTHY KEELER, *Register*.

“Recorded April 3, 1738.”

“NORWALK, March 17, 1742-3.

To MR. JOHN SMITH, *Collector at Ridgefield*.

“Sir. Please to cross Messrs. Benjamin Bradley, Jonathan Brooks, Robert Faquer, Samuel Lobdell, Caleb Lobdell, Ebenezer Lobdell, Jabez Northrop, Richard Osborn, Daniel Sherwood Sen<sup>r</sup>. Daniel Sherwood Jun<sup>r</sup>. David Osborn, Alexander Resseguie, Isaac Resseguie, Jacob Resseguie, Nathan Sherwood, Robert Smith, John Whitlock, Abraham Whitlock, and Nathan Whitlock's names out of your book for collecting Minister's rates ; and place their dues to account of—

“Your humble servant,  
RICHARD CANER, *Missionary*.

“Recorded Oct. 24, 1744 per me—  
TIMOTHY KEELER, *Register*.”

“March 15, 1744. Mr. Samuel Smith.

“Sir. Please to pay the Ministerial Rate which you have collected of the Professors of the Church of England in Ridgefield, to Mr Joseph Lamson ; and his Receipt shall be your discharge, from Sir,

“Your humble servants,  
HENRY CANER *Missionary*.  
RICHARD CANER *Missionary*.

“Received to Record,

“Dec. 24, 1744, and Recorded per me—  
TIMOTHY KEELER, *Register*.”

“Ridgefield, April 14, 1744. Then received of Samuel Smith Collector of the Ministerial Rate for the Town of Ridgefield for the year 1744, the sum of forty Pounds, eleven Shillings and eleven Pence of the old tenor, in full of the Episcopal parties' Rates in said Ridgefield,

£40.11.11. Received per me,

JOSEPH LAMSON.

“Received to Record December 24, 1744, and Recorded per me. TIMOTHY KEELER, *Register*.”

The Rev. David Perry was the first settled minister of the Church after the Revolution, and entered upon his charge in September, 1789, having been ordained by Bishop Seabury, September 22d, 1789, to deacon's orders ; and to priest's orders on the 16th of October following :

The following is copied from the church records :

“At a meeting of the First Episcopal Society holden at the Town House in Ridgefield by adjournment on the first Monday in August, 1789,

“Voted, That Doct. David Perry receive Holy Orders for this Society.”

The first church edifice erected here for Episcopal worship was about 1740, upon a spot in the Town Street, which was granted by the proprietors of the town, at a meeting held January 4th, 1739, and was situated directly in front of what was called the Sturtevant lot, and bounded within three feet of said lot ; the space granted was thirty-six feet north and south, and twenty-six feet east and west ; its location being a little south of the present church lot.

The following article, in reference to the grant, is from the Ridgefield town records :

“Whereas, at a Proprietor's Meeting January 4<sup>th</sup> 1740, did by a major vote, order and empower us the subscribers, to view and look a spot or place of ground that may be convenient and suitable to build and erect a Church or Meeting House, for those that are of the profession of the Church of England ; and also to agree with, and confirm unto them the said spot or piece of land so agreed upon ; in pursuance to, and by virtue of said vote, we have set out, and do agree with the said professors, that they shall have liberty of a certain spot of land in said Town Street, on the front of that home lot that was formerly John Sturtevant's deceased ; the west sill bounded within three feet of the line or front of said lot ; which said spot or piece of ground is to be in extent, thirty-six feet north and south ; and east and west, twenty-six feet.

RICHARD OLMSTED	} <i>Committee</i>
MATTHEW SEAMORE	
TIMOTHY KEELER	

“Received to Record, Jany. 10, 1746, and recorded per me—TIMOTHY KEELER, *Register*.”

This building remained until after the Revolutionary War. During the war it was taken by a commissary of the American army as a building in which to deposit the public stores. In April, 1777, the building was set on fire by the British forces in their retreat from Danbury. Though not consumed, it was rendered unfit for use as a place of public worship.

In June, 1784, at a meeting of those friendly to the Church of England, it was deemed advisable to tear down the old building and build a new one.

The following is the notice for said meeting :

“ To ALEXANDER RESSEGUIE of *Ridgefield in Fairfield County, Greeting.*

“ By authority of the State of Connecticut ; you are hereby required to notify and warn all the inhabitants living within the limits of the First Society in Ridgefield, that are professors of the Church of England, to meet and hold a Society meeting at the Church in said Society, on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of instant, June, at 3 o'clock after noon, (it being the place of worship for said professors,) for the purpose of choosing Society officers, repairing the church, hiring some person to perform Divine Service in said Episcopal Society, granting a tax for these purposes, and any other business proper for said meeting to do or act. By order of us—

PHILIP B. BRADLEY *Justice of Peace.*

EBENEZER LOBDELL

DAVID PERRY

ALEXANDER RESSEGUIE

} *Principal*  
 } *Inhabitants.*

“ RIDGEFIELD, June 19, 1784.”

The meeting was held according to notice, and it was voted not to repair the old church, to hire a person to perform divine service for four months, and to pay ten pounds by way of tax on the list of the year 1783, for the purpose of paying for this and other Society charges.

At a meeting held on the 28th day of October, 1784, it was voted to pull down the old church, and build a new one, forty feet long, thirty feet wide, and eighteen feet posts, a little south of the old one, and on the ground formerly granted by the town for that purpose.

“ Voted, To pay a tax of one shilling on the pound on the list of the year 1784, by the first day of April, 1785, for the purpose of erecting a new church.



“Voted, That Benjamin Hoyt, Ezekiel Wilson, Thaddeus Sturges, and Jonathan Whitlock be a committee to conduct the pulling down and disposing of the old church, and to manage and carry on the building of a new one.”

In the mean time Lieutenant Benjamin Smith donated a piece of ground on which to erect a new church ; the deed to which was executed in the year following, and bearing date September 20th, 1785. The plot thus deeded was on the north-east corner of his homestead, adjoining the Town Street, and which now comprises the yard in front of the present church. The ground in size was seventy-three feet in length north and south, and forty-three feet wide east and west, and bounded east by the Town Street, north by Nathan Dauchy's land, and south and west by his own land. The conditions were that it should be forever appropriated to the use of said church.

At a meeting held at the house of Captain Vivus Dauchy, on the 16th day of December, 1784, it was

“Voted, To reconsider the appointment of the Committee made at the meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of October ; and that Benjamin Hoyt and Ezekiel Wilson constitute the Committee to carry on the building of said church.

“Voted, That the said building shall stand at the north east corner of the Sturtevant lot so called, adjoining the Town Street, in the First Society in Ridgefield, on a piece of ground given by Benjamin Smith for that purpose.

“Voted, That the church shall not exceed forty-two feet in length ; and that the width and height be in proportion, according to the judgment of the Committee.”

The church was subsequently erected on said land,

and the size adopted was forty-four feet in length, and thirty-two feet in width, the ends facing north and south, with a door on the south and east sides, but without a steeple. A gallery was placed in the south end of the church.

The project of building immediately following the Revolutionary War, when the effort in raising means was difficult, from the impoverishment of the people generally in consequence of the war, it was not without struggles, financially and otherwise, that the process of rebuilding was carried forward, and that by slow degrees through a series of years, until it was finally accomplished, for the resources of the parish were limited.

The following are extracts from the parish record at that time :

“At a meeting of the First Episcopal Society in Ridgefield, holden at the house of Capt. Vivus Dauchy on the first day of Sept. 1785,

“Voted, That Ebenezer Stebbins be a committee, in addition to Benjamin Hoyt, and Ezekiel Wilson, appointed at a former meeting, to manage the building of a Church.

“Voted, likewise, That all persons who have undertaken to get timber for a church, shall have it at the place appointed, by Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. September; or the Committee shall not be obliged to accept it in payment of taxes.”

At a meeting of the Society, held at the house of Capt. Vivus Dauchy, April 27th, 1787 :

“Voted, That said Society shall pay a tax of two pence on the Pound on the List of 1786, into the

Treasury of said Society by first day of October next, for the purpose of carrying on the building a Church.

“Item, That any person who shall furnish good eighteen inch chestnut shingle for the Church, shall be allowed one Pound, four shillings per thousand. That good whitewood inch Boards, shall be valued at six shillings per hundred foot ; three quarter-inch Oak Boards at four shillings and six pence per hundred foot.

“Item, That the aforesaid articles shall be delivered at the church in said Ridgefield by the first day of June next ; otherwise, the Committee shall not be obliged to take them in payment of taxes towards the building a church.”

At a meeting held at the house of Captain Vivus Dauchy, on the 31st day of September, 1787 :

“Voted, That the Society shall pay a tax of four Pence on the Pound, on the List of the year 1787, by the first day of April next.

“Voted, That Rye at three shillings and six pence per bushel ; Corn at three shillings ; Oats at one shilling and six pence ; Buckwheat at two shillings per bushel ; Flax at seven Pence per pound, shall be taken in payment of said tax.”

The church was not comfortably furnished until the year 1791, and the entire ground floor was not occupied with pews until some time after the church was used for divine service ; and at a meeting held March 30th, 1791, it was “voted,” That we will sell the lots for the pews in the church, and also voted, That they shall be sold at public vendue to the highest bidder. It was voted, also, “That the committee appointed to carry on the finishing of the church, shall lay out the lots for the pews in the same, and advertise and sell them as before directed, when and at what time they

think proper. Benjamin Hoyt and Joshua Burt were said committee."

At a meeting held April 17th, 1794, a committee was appointed to superintend the building of a pulpit in the church.

At a meeting held April 17th, 1799, it was

"Voted, That the Society's Committee be directed to procure materials, and build the remaining pews in the church, and charge the same to the Society."

In the year 1819 the church was materially altered and improved, side galleries were built, and a steeple erected on the south end, in style and form the same as the one at the Congregational Church. The door at the east side was closed, and in its place a square pew was built and occupied by Abijah Resseguie and others; he then being in manhood's prime, and although nearly sixty years have rolled away, he still continues in a vigorous old age an honored citizen among us, and also continues to hold, as in years past, the office of one of the Wardens of the church.

In the year 1820 an effort was made by the parish to obtain some remuneration for the damage done to the former church edifice during the Revolutionary War. The following is from the parish records:

At a meeting held on the 24th day of April, 1820, it was,

"Voted, That Mr. Jeremiah Mead be an agent for the purpose of preferring a petition in behalf of this parish to the Honorable General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, at their session in May next, praying for a remuneration of damages sustained in consequence of the injury done to the former church belonging to the parish, by being used as a store house for provisions by

the Commissary, in the time of the Revolutionary War ; and that said Agent be empowered and instructed to employ counsel to advocate said petition."

The application, however, proved unsuccessful, and no compensation was ever obtained to cover the loss sustained in consequence of the firing of the church by the British.

In the year 1828 a bell was procured of six hundred pounds weight, and placed in the tower of the church, the first one owned by the parish.

The church edifice never having been consecrated, on the 12th day of November, 1831, the Right Rev. Bishop Brownell visited the parish and consecrated it by the name of St. Stephen's Church, and at the same time administered the rite of confirmation to fifty-two persons—a large number for this parish. It was a year of great religious interest in the church, and sixty new communicants were added in the course of the year, under the successful ministry of the Rev. Charles J. Todd.

In the year 1832 the square pews in the centre of the church were removed, and "slips," or long pews, erected in their stead ; the square pews on each side still remaining.

On the 29th day of January, 1841, a meeting was held, and measures taken for the erection of a new church, provided a suitable site could be procured. A plot of ground directly in the rear of the church lot was generously donated by Isaac Jones, the owner of the land adjoining, in size one hundred feet east and west, and eighty-two to eighty-six feet north and south, the deed bearing date August 12th, 1841. Mr. Jones had previously given a strip of ground ten feet



wide at the south end of the old church lot. The corner-stone of the present church was laid by the Rector, the Rev. Warner Hoyt, in the presence of a number of the clergy and of the inhabitants, on the 12th day of August, 1841. The church was finished and consecrated by Bishop Brownell on the 20th day of September, 1842. The organ, the first one in possession of the parish, was placed in the church and first used at its consecration.

Thus was completed and consecrated the third church in this parish, a little over a century after the erection of the first church edifice. Its dimensions are forty feet in width and fifty-six feet in length, with a projection in front for a vestibule and stairway of five feet, and with the addition afterward of a chancel of a depth of fifteen feet, making the entire present length of the church seventy-six feet.

Tablets were also placed in the walls of the church in commemoration of two venerable laymen of the parish, one to Samuel Stebbins, Esq., the other to Nathan Dauchy, both firm and zealous supporters of the church, in all its vicissitudes—the former a distinguished and useful citizen of the town, as well as of the parish ; for forty years the town clerk, and during a period of forty-six years the parish clerk, and for over forty years the senior warden of the church.

In the month of August, 1851, the bell now in use, and weighing 1508 pounds, from the foundry of Meneely & Sons, of West Troy, N. Y., was placed in the tower of the church; the old one having been disposed of to a neighboring church in Georgetown.

In the year 1857 measures were taken for an extensive alteration and improvement in the church, the

building of a chancel, alteration of the pews, and to be so arranged as to admit of a centre aisle, coloring and frescoing the walls, the procuring of a new organ from the manufactory of George Jardine, of New York, of a sweet tone and finish, all of which improvements being at an expense of about two thousand dollars. The church was reopened with appropriate services by the Right Rev. Bishop Williams, assisted by a number of the neighboring clergy, including former rectors of the parish.

In the summer of 1875 the organ was enlarged by the addition of several stops, and 126 new pipes, making the present number of 16 stops and 450 pipes ; the addition nearly doubling its capacity.

The parish has a fund of a little over three thousand dollars, the income of which is devoted toward the support of the ministry.

The first efforts made toward the creation of a fund for the support of the ministry in the parish was in 1836, when Nathan Dauchy, Esq., of Troy, N. Y., a native of this town, made an offer for that purpose on condition that the parish would raise a like amount. In order to avail themselves of his generous offer, they used persevering exertions, and raised the sum of twelve hundred dollars, to which he added a like amount. This, with later benefactions, from other sources, increased the fund to its present amount, three thousand and fifty dollars.

In the year 1869 a legacy was received by the bequest of the late Nancy Smith, of Norwalk, formerly of Ridgefield, of five hundred dollars, the income of which to be used in aid of the poor of the parish.

It is also possessed of a convenient parsonage, built

in 1853, with a glebe of four acres, in the central part of the village, of a valuation of about six thousand dollars.

The first building erected for a parsonage was in 1838, upon a piece of ground containing one acre, appropriated by the late Philip Bradley, in the northern part of the village street, and which, with improvements, is now the residence of Gould Rockwell. It was built by a stock company, and occupied by the clergy until it was afterward sold, and the present one erected more contiguous to the church.

The first wardens of the church, of which there is any existing record, that of 1788, were Benjamin Hoyt and Doctor David Perry. Doctor Perry was also the clerk and treasurer of the parish from the commencement of its permanent record in 1784 until his admission to holy orders in 1789.

The present wardens of the church are Keeler, Dauchy, and Abijah Resseguie, who have served the church in that capacity for a series of years—Mr. Dauchy having served the church as a vestryman, parish clerk, and in his present office for nearly half a century. During a period of thirty-three years he has been a warden of the church.

The likenesses of nearly all the rectors of the present century are placed on the walls in the vestry room. On the left hand of the chancel is placed a memorial window to the Rev. Warner Hoyt, under whose zealous rectorship the present church was built, and who is the only one of its clergy thus far who have been removed by death while in charge of the duties of the parish.

Among the many persons not heretofore named,

with two or three exceptions, as among the early and prominent supporters of the church, who have passed away, may be named the following : Caleb Lobdell, Vivus Dauchy, Jacob Resseguie, Ezekiel Wilson, John Jones, Ebenezer Stebbins, Hackaliah Burt, Eliphalet Brush, Nehemiah Sturges, Epenetus How, Jeremiah Smith, Jacob Dauchy, Benjamin Sherwood, Benjamin Smith, Jeremiah Mead, Daniel Jones, Timothy Jones, Isaac Olmsted, Thaddeus Olmsted, David Burr, Samuel B. Grumman, Czar Jones, John M. Smith, Philip Northrup, William Sherwood, Stephen Olmsted, Walter Dauchy, Chauncey Olmsted, William Crocker, and others. Of the above, Jacob Dauchy served as a warden of the church twenty-three years, and John M. Smith for a period of twenty-seven years.

The first instance in which the rite of confirmation was administered was in 1809, when Bishop Abraham Jarvis visited the parish, and confirmed 86 persons, and which with those confirmed on subsequent episcopal visitations, makes the entire number of 510 persons confirmed in this church to the present time.

The parish at the present time numbers 85 families, about 250 baptized members, and 140 communicants.

The first year in the history of the parish in which it was enabled to avail itself of a resident clergyman with constant services was in 1837, under the rectorship of the Rev. Eli Wheeler, who remained until 1839, when he was succeeded by the Rev. Warner Hoyt, who entered upon the regular charge of the parish, and was the first occupant of its first parsonage, just erected, and the parish has been favored with the undivided services of all succeeding clergymen to the present time.

The ministrations of all the preceding clergy, from

the year 1789, when the Rev. David Perry assumed the charge of the parish, until the year 1837, were in connection with other parishes. The Rev. David Perry served the churches in Ridgebury and Danbury a portion of the time. His successors—the Rev. David Butler, the Rev. Elijah G. Plumb, and the Rev. Reuben Hubbard—each had charge of the three churches of Ridgefield, Danbury, and Reading, giving an equal time to each.

The Rev. Charles Smith, the Rev. Origen P. Holcomb, and the Rev. Charles J. Todd, each had charge of the churches in Wilton and Ridgefield, residing in Wilton, and devoting two thirds of the time to Wilton and one third to Ridgefield. The Rev. Jacob Lyman Clark took the charge of the church in Ridgefield, in connection with that of New Canaan, ministering one half of the time in each until 1837, and residing in New Canaan, when he accepted a call to the church in Waterbury, Ct., and which brings us to the period when constant services were secured to the parish, under the Rev. Eli Wheeler, as before mentioned.

Connected with the foregoing history of the church in Ridgefield arises the reflection that during the century and a half which has transpired, since the first introduction of the services of the Church here—a period embracing about five generations of those who have in succession attended on her ministrations—that we, too, are rapidly following the generations that are numbered with the congregation of the dead ; a number far greater than those who compose the present congregation of the living, and who are still favored with the privilege of entering her sacred courts, and listening to the calls of the Gospel, as uttered from the



lips of those, her ministers, appointed to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

The following are the inscriptions upon tablets in the church:

THIS TABLET  
is erected by the Vestry,  
in memory of  
NATHAN DAUCHY,  
a zealous friend and supporter  
of this Church.  
He died April 14, 1824,  
in the glorious hope of a  
Blessed immortality.

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"Mark the perfect man, and  
behold the upright, for the  
end of that man is peace."

THIS TABLET  
is erected by the Vestry,  
in memory of  
SAMUEL STEBBINS, Esq.,  
Senior Warden of this Church,  
From the year 1793, until his death.  
He died March 27, 1836,  
aged 73 years.

His untiring activity,  
and Christian devotedness,  
in the cause of religion, and  
the prosperity of this  
Church ; are worthy  
of a grateful remembrance  
in the annals of  
this Parish.

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“ Blessed are the dead who  
die in the Lord.”

The lettering on the tablets is all in capital letters.

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## A SUCCESSION OF MINISTERS.

Names.	Date of Entering on Ministry.	Date of Leaving.
Rev. Samuel Johnson, of Stratford.....	1725.	.....
Rev. Henry Caner, of Fairfield.....	1727.	.....
Rev. John Beach, of Newtown.....	1735.	to 1738.
Rev. James Wetmore, of Rye.....	1740.	.....
Rev. Richard Caner, of Norwalk.....	1742.	.....
Rev. Joseph Lamson, of Rye, with } Bedford and North Castle. }	.. 1744.	.....
Rev. Richard S. Clark, of Salem, with } Ridgefield and Ridgebury. }	.. 1764.	to 1767.
Rev. Epenetus Townsend, of Salem, } with Ridgefield and Ridgebury. }	.. May 26, 1768.	July, 1776.

The above were missionaries of the “ Society in England for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,” previous to the Revolutionary War, who officiated at Ridgefield in connection with other stations or at intervals.

Names of Rectors.	Date of Entering on Ministry.	Date of Leaving.
Rev. David Belden.....	1788.	for 4 months.
Rev. David Perry.....	Sept. 22, 1791.	April 1, 1795.
Rev. David Butler.....	Feb. 14, 1799.	Oct. 1, 1804.
Rev. Russell Wheeler. ....	Sept. 15, 1805.	May 1, 1806.
Rev. Elijah G. Plumb.....	April 2, 1807.	April 11, 1811.
Rev. Reuben Hubbard.....	Jan. 15, 1812.	April, 1818.
Rev. Charles Smith.....	June 15, 1818.	April, 1823.
Rev. Origen P. Holcomb.....	May 26, 1823.	Easter, 1831.
Rev. Charles J. Todd.....	May 15, 1831.	Sept., 1834.
Rev. Jacob Lyman Clark.....	July 20, 1835.	Mar. 26, 1837.
Rev. Eli Wheeler.....	Aug. 1, 1837.	Mar. 31, 1839.
Rev. Joseph H. Nichols.....	April 28, 1839.	June 30, 1839.
Rev. Warner Hoyt.....	July 6, 1839.	Oct. 18, 1844, deceased.
Rev. Thaddeus M. Leavenworth....	April 1, 1845.	Oct. 1, 1845.
Rev. David H. Short.....	Dec. 1, 1845.	April 1, 1846.
Rev. Henry Olmsted, Jr.....	April 13, 1846.	April 20, 1850.
Rev. William Staunton .....	June 8, 1850.	May 30, 1852.
Rev. Theodore S. Rumney.....	August, 1853.	Nov. 14, 1853.
Rev. William H. Williams.....	March 1, 1854.	Oct. 7, 1863.
Rev. Curtiss T. Woodruff.....	May 1, 1864.	May 10, 1866.
Rev. Francis T. Russell.....	June 3, 1866.	May 1, 1868.
Rev. Samuel F. Jarvis. ....	Aug. 2, 1868.	Aug. 3, 1873.
Rev. David D. Bishop. ....	Oct. 1, 1873.	May 12, 1878.
Rev. Francis A. Henry.....	July 1, 1878.	Present Rect'r

## CHAPTER IX.

### HISTORY OF METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

THE extensive religious revivals that preceded and followed the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the Christmas Conference held in Baltimore, Md., A.D. 1784, prepared and raised up young men who became evangelists, and were sent by Rev. Francis Asbury, travelling Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to various parts of the United States.

As early as A.D. 1787, the Rev. Cornelius Cook preached in Ridgefield, and Ambrose Olmsted, Jr., received the following certificate :

“ To whom it may concern : These certify that Ambrose Olmsted, Jr., is a constant attendant at public worship (as opportunity offers) with the people called Methodists, and that he contributes his due proportion toward maintaining said worship & ministry.

“ Certified by me, CORNELIUS COOK,  
Minister of the M. E. Church.

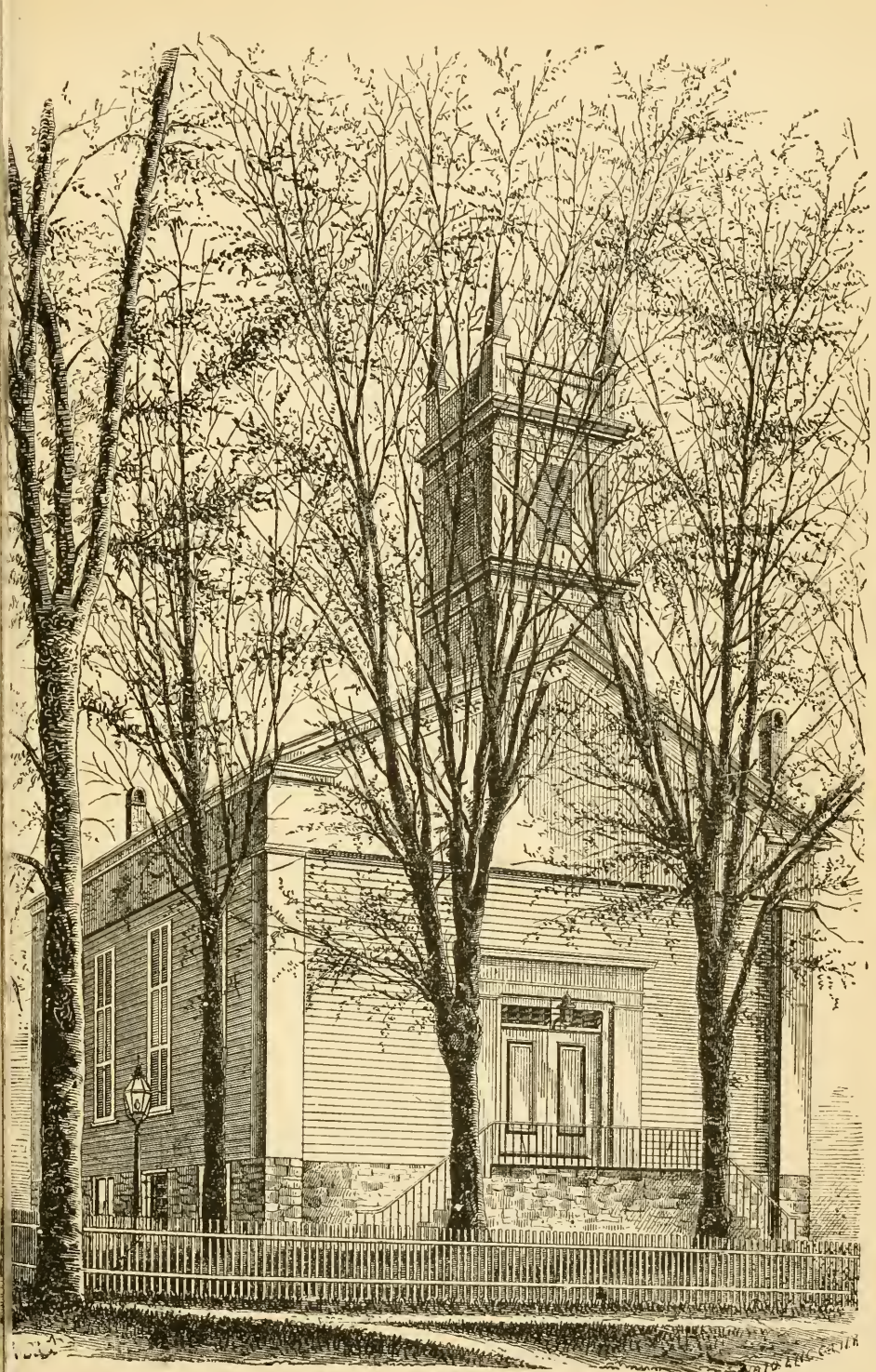
Nov. 16, A.D., 1787.

Recorded Dec. 1st, 1787, by Benjamin Smith, Congregational Society's Clerk.”

At the first Methodist Conference held in New York City, June, 1789, the Rev. Jesse Lee, from Virginia, was sent to the “ Stamford Circuit,” in New England.

His first sermon was preached in Norwalk, on the highway, June 17th, 1789. He formed a two weeks' circuit, embracing Stamford, Norwalk, Fairfield, Strat-





METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.





ford, Milford, Redding, Danbury, Ridgefield, and other intermediate places, and the name was changed to Fairfield Circuit.

Mr. Lee preached his first sermon in Ridgefield probably on the 26th of June, 1789, in a building known as the "Independent School-house," situated near Mr. P. C. Lounsbury's house, formerly owned by Nehemiah Perry, M.D.

On Thursday, January 28th, 1790, the first "Class" was formed in Ridgefield, being the third in New England, and was composed of Ichabod Wheeler and wife, and Daniel Keeler and wife, at Limestone, at the house of Ichabod Wheeler, near Taylor's Mill, and which continued to be a preaching place for some years.

On the 27th of February, A.D. 1790, Elder Jacob Brush, and Revs. George Roberts and Daniel Smith, came from Maryland, to labor under direction of Mr. Lee, who extended his labors eastward to New Haven.

The early records of the society being lost, it is impossible to ascertain who were the early members of the Methodist Society in Ridgefield; but we find in the records of the Congregational Society that certificates similar to the one above quoted were issued by "Jesse Lee, Methodist preacher," to Jeremiah Olmsted, of Ridgebury, October 17th, 1789; also, April 1st, 1790, by Rev. George Roberts, to Ichabod Wheeler; December 24th, 1790, by Rev. John Bloodgood, to Daniel Keeler; March 30th, 1797, to Stephen Mills, Powell Batterson, and Jonathan Stevens.

March 27, 1798, John Mills.

Dec. 10, 1804, Thaddeus Benedict.

Dec. 10, 1804, Joseph Mead, 3<sup>d</sup>.

Nov. 5, 1805, Sam<sup>l</sup>. Hoyt, 2<sup>d</sup>.

Dec. 7, 1805, Abijah Hyatt.

Mar. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1806, Benjamin Bouton.

Aug. 6, 1807, Martha Bouton.

Nov. 23, 1807, Jabez M. Gilbert.

Mar. 28, 1808, Dan<sup>l</sup>. Dean. •

Nov. 14, 1809, Amos Baker, M.D.

For several years there was no preaching upon the Sabbath by the "circuit preachers;" but this vacancy was most acceptably filled by the frequent and voluntary labors of Absalom Day, of Norwalk; Aaron Sanford and Hawley Sandford, of Redding; Rory Starr, of Danbury, "local (or lay) preachers," and James Coleman, "superannuated," of Ridgefield, whose name and labors have been handed down in grateful remembrance to the children of the fathers. "Classes" were formed in North Street in 1805, in the village in 1809, and from 1807 to 1826 the houses of Thos. Hyatt, Jabez M. Gilbert, and Amos Baker, M.D., were the regular preaching places of the "Methodist Itinerants."

In 1824, the first church edifice was erected, standing in the fork of the roads leading to the districts called North Street and Titicus, and the "circuit" appears under the name of "Redding and Bridgeport." Frequent revivals of religious interest had occurred, specially in the years 1816, 1822, and 1828.

In 1831 a more extensive and powerful work was experienced, resulting in large additions to all the churches. Among the converts was Mr. William Crocker, who soon became a very acceptable and useful "local preacher."

The following is a list of the Ministers, sent by the New York Conference to the circuits, embracing Ridgefield, from the year 1790 to 1836, at which date Ridgefield became a station, with a resident minister.

FAIRFIELD CIRCUIT.

- 1790. John Bloodgood.
- 1791. Nathaniel Burton Mills, Aaron Hunt.
- 1792. Joshua Taylor, Smith Weeks.
- 1793. James Coleman, Aaron Hunt.
- 1794. Zebulon Kaukey, Nicholas Snethen.

REDDING CIRCUIT.

- 1795. Daniel Dennis, Timothy Dewey.
- 1796. Elijah Woolsey, Robert Leeds.
- 1797. David Buck, Augustus Jocelyn.
- 1798. William Thatcher.
- 1799. David Brown.
- 1800. Augustus Jocelyn.
- 1801. Samuel Merwin, Isaac Candee.
- 1802. James Coleman, Isaac Candee.
- 1803. James Campbell, N. U. Tompkins.
- 1804. Peter Moriarty, Sylvester Foster.
- 1805. Peter Moriarty, Samuel Merwin.
- 1806. Nathan Felch, Oliver Sykes.
- 1807. James M. Smith, Zalmon Lyon.
- 1808. Noble W. Thomas, Jonathan Lyon.

NEW YORK CONFERENCE.

- 1809. Billy Hibbard, Isaac Candee.
- 1810. Nathan Emory, John Russell.
- 1811. Aaron Hunt, Oliver Sykes, and John Reynolds.
- 1812. Seth Crowell, Gilbert Lyon, S. Beach.
- 1813. Aaron Hunt, Henry Eames.
- 1814. Ebenezer Washburn, Reuben Harris.
- 1815. Elijah Woolsey, Reuben Harris.
- 1816. Samuel Bushnel, John Boyd.

- 1817. Samuel Bushnel, Theodocidus Clarke.
- 1818. James M. Smith, Theodocius Clarke.
- 1819. J. S. Smith, Phineas Cook.
- 1820. Laban Clark, Phineas Cook.
- 1821. Laban Clark, Aaron Hunt.
- 1822. Samuel Cochrane, Aaron Hunt.
- 1823. Samuel Cochrane, John Reynolds.
- 1824. Elijah Woolsey, John Reynolds, Aaron Hunt,  
Super.

From 1825 to 1827 it was called

#### REDDING AND BRIDGEPORT CIRCUIT.

- 1825. Marvin Richardson, H. Humphreys, Frederic  
W. Siger, A. Hunt, Super.
- 1826. Marvin Richardson, H. Humphreys, A. Hunt,  
Super., Oliver Sykes, Super.
- 1827. Henry Stead, John Lovejoy, J. C. Bontecue,  
O. Sykes, Super.

#### REDDING CIRCUIT.

- 1828. Henry Stead, Gershom Pearce.
- 1829. Ebenezer Washburn, Gershom Pearce.
- 1830. Ebenezer Washburn, Oliver V. Ammerman.
- 1831. James Young, Josiah Bowen, O. Sykes, Super.
- 1832. Nicholas White, Jesse Hunt.
- 1833. Jesse Hunt, John Burton Beach.
- 1834. Josiah Bowen, John Burton Beach.

#### REDDING AND NEWTOWN CIRCUIT.

- 1835. Humphrey Humphreys, Josiah L. Dickerson,  
John Davies.

In 1836, as above stated, Ridgefield was separated from other appointments, and became a "station," having Rev. Parmelee Chamberlain as its pastor, who remained two years, and at the close of his labors re-



ported a membership of one hundred and eighteen, "probationers" included.

In the year 1839 occurred the most extensive religious awakening in the history of the church, under the ministry of Rev. Thos. Sparks. The curiosity of the community to hear the "experience of a converted sailor"—Rev. George C. Bancroft—drew large audiences.

But the relation of these "experiences" was accompanied by such spiritual power, and enforced by such vivid declaration of divine truth, and the clear and logical arguments concerning the truths of the Gospel, as presented by Rev. Paul R. Brown, that many who came through curiosity were deeply convinced of the truth, resulting in the conversion of large numbers and the increase of the membership of all the churches in the village.

The large accession to the Methodist Church and congregation made it necessary to provide a larger place of worship. Accordingly, in the year 1841, the house now standing on the corner of Main and Catoonah Streets was erected during the pastorate of Rev. Chas. Chittenden. The humble beginnings of ninety years ago are represented to-day by a membership of nearly two hundred.

Nor has the influence of this church been confined to this vicinity alone. Other towns, and the distant West, have heard the Gospel preached by the sons of those fathers and mothers.

Revs. Stephen Remmington, Thos. B. Rockwell, Wm. Crocker, Albert Nash, Elias Gilbert, Alonzo B. Pulling, Miles N. Olmsted, and Frank W. Lockwood have been sent forth from her bosom, as chosen minis-

ters of God ; while the plains of India have been hal-  
lowed by the self-sacrificing labors and early death of  
Mrs. S. Minerva Downey, daughter of Rev. Thos. B.  
Rockwell.

The following list of names is of those ministers who  
have been stationed in Ridgefield from 1836 to 1878 :

1836-37.	Rev. Parmelee Chamberlain.
1838-39.	“ Thos. Sparks.
1840.	“ Seymour Van Deusen.
1841-42.	“ Cha <sup>s</sup> . Chittenden.
1843-44.	“ Abram S. Francis.
1845-46.	“ Charles Stearns.
1847-48.	“ Sylvester S. Strong.
1849-50.	“ Nathaniel Mead.
1851.	“ Ira Abbott.
1852-53.	“ Reuben H. Loomis.
1854-55.	“ Friend W. Smith.
1856-57.	“ Joseph Wildey.
1858-59.	“ Joseph Woolley.
1860-61.	“ Joseph Smith.
1862-63.	“ Calvin B. Ford.
1864.	“ Samuel F. Johnson.
1865-66.	“ James D. Bouton.
1867-68-69.	“ George L. Thompson.
1870-71-72.	“ Larman W. Abbott.
1873-74-75.	“ Theodore C. Beach.
1876.	“ John B. Merwin.
1877.	“ William Ross.
1878.	“ Smith H. Platt.

The history of this church would not be complete  
without reference especially to one to whose tireless  
labors, consistent life, and godly example the church is  
indebted more than to any other person for its growth  
and influence in the community—JABEZ M. GILBERT.  
The “ Methodist itinerant ” came preaching a univer-

sal atonement ; man's moral agency ; a full, free, and perfect salvation from sin ; the new birth ; the knowledge of the " witness of the Spirit ;" the duty of holiness of life.

These truths met the wants of his soul, he accepted them, hesitated not to join the little band of like faith, demonstrated by a long and consistent life the truth of the doctrine he professed, and died leaving a vacancy not soon to be filled.

A man of firm convictions, strong will, stern integrity, deep and ardent sympathies, liberality equal to and often beyond his means, the Church found in him a reliable leader, a wise counsellor, a constant and liberal supporter ; the poor a cheerful and open-hearted benefactor, and the community a recognized example of consistent piety.

## CHAPTER X.

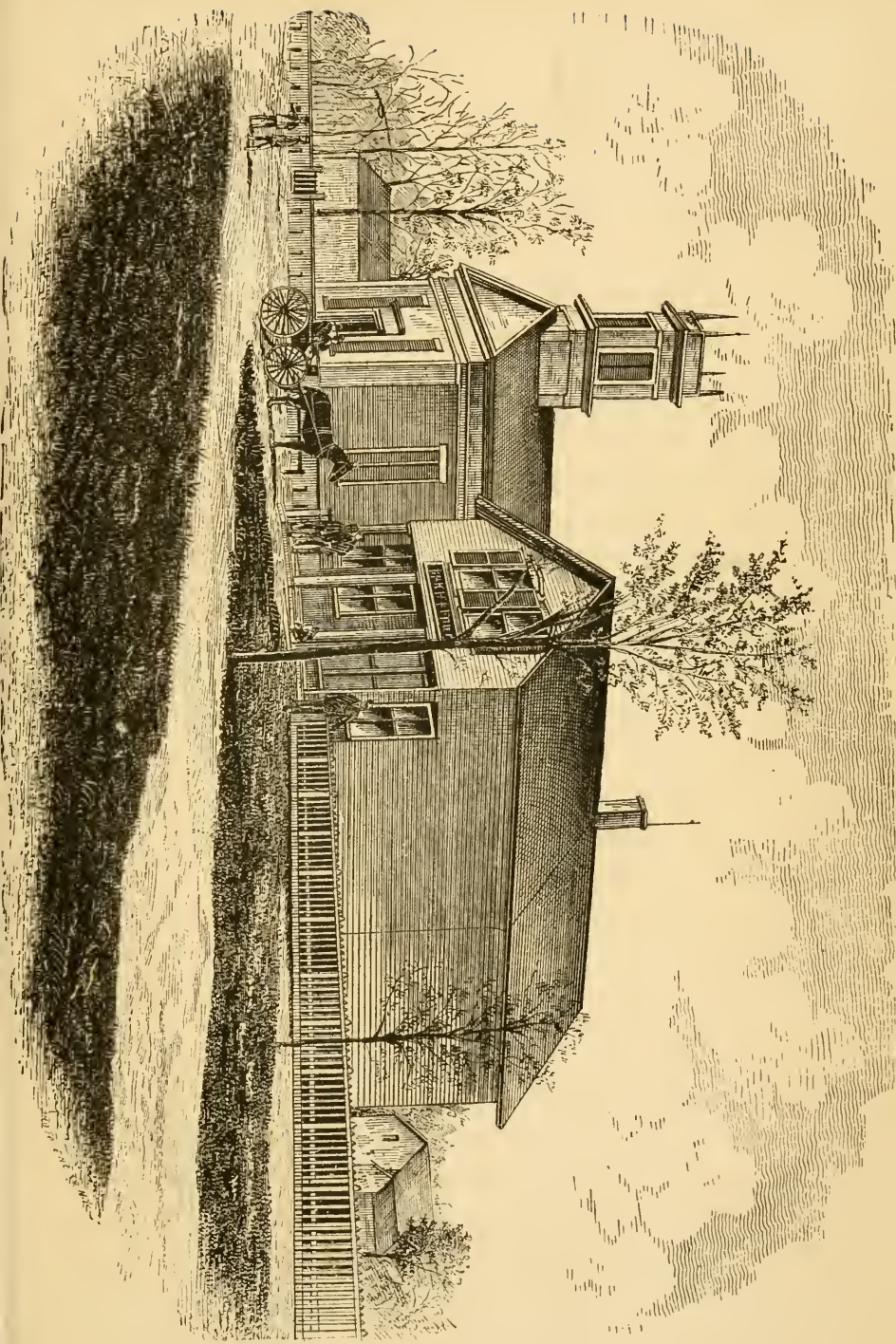
### CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF RIDGEBURY, AND PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF RIDGEBURY.

*(Now extinct.)*

THE Congregational Church in Ridgebury was organized in the month of January, 1769. It was composed of eighteen members, "professing the doctrine and practising the discipline agreed upon by the General Consociation of the Churches of Connecticut, at their meeting in Saybrook, 1708."

It appears from the records that meetings for public worship were held as early as 1760, in what was called the "New Patent Meeting House," which was probably built as early as 1738, but there was no settled pastor until 1769, when a council of the consociated pastors and elders of the western district of Fairfield County, composed of Revs. Jonathan Ingersoll, Robert Silliman, Moses Mather, Samuel Sherwood, Seth Pomroy, Hezekiah Ripley, and Ebenezer Davenport, together with the following nine messengers: Mr. Joseph Bishom, of Stamford; Joseph Platt, Esq., Norwalk; Lieut. Nathan Olmsted, Ridgefield; Mr. Stephen Godfry, Green's Farms; Capt. Elisha Albert Greenfield; Lieut. Nehemiah Mead, Wilton; Theophilus Fitch, Esq., Canaan; Deacon Daniel Andrews, Norfield; Ensign Nathan Read, Middlesex, was convened and the church organized.









At the time of its organization the church consisted of the following eighteen members, who presented certificates from neighboring churches :

Rev. Samuel Camp, Jabish Smith, Isaiah Birchard, James Northrop, John Rockwell, Daniel Coley, David Rockwell, Timothy Benedict, Samuel Keeler, Lemuel Abbott, Samuel St. John, John Joyce, Jonathan Osborn, Samuel Gates, James Sears, John Barber, Thomas Frost, and Thomas Wilson ; and the Rev. Samuel Camp was ordained and installed as their first pastor.

The ordination services were as follows : First, prayer by Rev. Mr. Bartlet ; sermon, by Rev. Mr. Ingersoll ; ordaining prayer, Rev. Mr. Mather ; charge, Rev. Mr. Silliman ; right hand of fellowship, Rev. Mr. Pomroy ; laying on of hands, Revs. Jonathan Ingersoll, Robert Silliman, Moses Mather, and Seth Pomroy. The concluding prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Taylor, and the benediction pronounced by the pastor. Mr. Camp's salary was " seventy-five pounds lawful money annually." The society also voted to give him one hundred and fifty pounds for his settlement, to be paid in three equal annual instalments. Mr. Camp continued his labors with the church until 1804, a period of over thirty-five years, when he was regularly dismissed. His health not permitting him to labor as pastor, he continued his residence in Ridgebury until his death, which took place March 10th, 1813. He was thrice married, and is buried beside his three wives in the cemetery, a few rods north of the meeting-house.

After the dismissal of Mr. Camp the church was without a settled pastor until 1821, when Rev. Nathan

Burton was called, ordained, and installed as pastor. He continued in that relation until June, 1841, a period of nearly twenty years. Mr. Burton was a member of the church in Ridgebury, and was chosen deacon in 1813. After serving in that capacity for eight years, he resigned the office in October, 1821, to become pastor of the church. He died in August, 1859, aged seventy-nine years.

Mr. Burton was succeeded by Rev. Zalmon B. Burr, of Westport, Ct., a licentiate of New London Association. He was ordained and installed in June, 1843, and remained with the church seven years. After Mr. Burr, the society engaged the services of Rev. Martin Dudley, now of Easton, Ct., who preached about a year.

The next settled pastor was Rev. Philo Canfield, of Buffalo City Presbytery. He commenced his labors in August, 1852, and was installed in September of the same year. Mr. Canfield continued his relations with the church until the Spring of 1856, when the connection was dissolved. In August of the same year, Rev. William W. Page was employed to preach for the society one year, as a supply. From September, 1859, to September, 1861, Rev. E. S. Huntington, of Danbury, preached for the society. Mr. Huntington was succeeded by Rev. F. J. Jackson, who preached nearly a year.

At a special meeting of the church, convened for that purpose, December, 1862, a call was extended to Rev. John E. Elliott, of Barkhamsted, Ct. Mr. Elliott accepted the call, and commenced his labors in February, 1863, and was ordained and installed in

May following. He remained with the church but two years, or thereabouts.

In the autumn of 1867 Rev. Augustus Alvord, of Bolton, Ct., commenced preaching for the church, and remained with them until August, 1871, four years, preaching as a stated supply; and in September of the same year (1871), Rev. William M. Parsons, of Brooklyn, N. Y., was invited to supply the pulpit. The invitation was accepted, and Mr. Parsons has continued his labors with the church until the present time.

Mr. Camp, the first pastor of the church, was a native of Salisbury, Ct. But little is known of the results of his labors. He left on record the names of thirty-five children of members of the church baptized by him from 1769 to 1799, none of whom are now living, so far as known. Mr. Burton also records the names of some twenty "children of believing parents" baptized by him. Of those baptized in infancy by Mr. Burton, but one is a member of the church at the present time, or residing in Ridgebury, though several are known to be living elsewhere.

During the long interval between the dismissal of Mr. Camp and the settlement of Mr. Burton, services were regularly held in the church, the pulpit being supplied by neighboring ministers, or a sermon read by some person of the congregation appointed for that purpose; and from 1813 to 1817 a season of special religious interest was enjoyed, thirty-four members being added to the church by a public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The labors of Mr. Burton were highly appreciated

by the church, and eminently blessed of God. From 1821 to 1843, which covers the whole period of his ministry as pastor, one hundred and fourteen were added to the church, of whom "some remain unto this present, but the greater part are fallen asleep."

During the pastorate of Mr. Burr, 1843 to 1850, eight new members were added. From 1850 to the close of Mr. Canfield's pastoral relations with the church in 1856, twenty were added. From 1856 to the present time the additions to the church have been "few and far between," only seventeen in the whole twenty-two years.

There have been nineteen deacons of the church since its organization in 1769, of whom but one, deacon James E. Hayt, remains. In October, 1762, the Ecclesiastical Society of Ridgebury bought the land on which the church now stands, of John Whitlock. The consideration was "the love and respect I have and do bear unto said Discenting Society in Ridgebury."

Previous to this time, it is said, an old Congregational church of some kind stood on the hill about half a mile south of the present house of worship. This was probably the "New Patent Meeting House" before alluded to. But in August, 1768, the society voted to build a "*Church*" forty-six feet long by thirty-six feet wide, to be "shingled with cedar shingles, and sided with chestnut or oak." It was further voted that "the new house shall stand facing the east, and be finished by the first day of July, 1769."

In February, 1784, it was voted, "That we will do something towards making the meeting-house more comfortable and convenient." And in 1793 a committee was appointed to "mark out the meeting-house



into pews, and sell them ; and to lay out the money that shall arise therefrom on the house." The congregation worshipped on rough wooden benches for twenty-four years before the pews were built, and listened to golden truths preached from a plain wooden pulpit. There were no stoves, except such as the more elderly females brought with them on the Sabbath, and these were always replenished with fresh coals from the neighboring fireplaces during the intermission. The house was without plastered walls, but we never heard that any of the congregation complained of the cold.

After the introduction of pews, the two—known as No. 5—on each side of the pulpit, were reserved as "Honorary Pews," and the two—No. 11—"under the stairs," as "Spare Pews."

During the brief service of a Mr. Perkins, who supplied the pulpit for nearly a year after the dismissal of Mr. Camp, it was voted, in October, 1804, that "persons of other persuasions may come and hear Mr. Perkins preach."

At a meeting of the society held November 30th, 1818, it was voted "that the Society grant liberty to the town of Ridgefield to hold their Town Meeting in the Meeting House in said Ridgebury for one Meeting."

During the summer of 1816, and again in 1834, the society repaired the meeting-house built in 1768, very much improving its external appearance, and in 1838 they also thoroughly repaired the interior, entirely removing the wall, pews, and pulpit, supplying their places with new walls, convenient slips, and a desk of more modern style. They also closed the doors on

the north and east, leaving but one entrance to the church.

In the spring of 1832, the society purchased ten acres of land with the buildings standing thereon, for a parsonage, and February 12th, 1838, they sold the same to David Hanford, of Norwalk, Ct.

In the year 1844, the present pleasant and convenient parsonage house was erected on a plot of ground four rods by twenty, presented to the society by Mr. David Hanford, and the late Gamaliel N. Benedict, Esq.

The "old church," which had stood as a sort of moral lighthouse for more than eighty years, and which had been the spiritual birthplace of so many souls, was finally demolished, and a new house—thirty by forty-six feet—erected in its place, which was dedicated, with appropriate exercises, to Almighty God in 1851. It is well furnished, with a bell weighing nine hundred pounds, a melodeon, etc., etc., and though there is but a feeble remnant of the church left, yet the word of God is faithfully preached every Sabbath, and the ordinances of the Gospel regularly administered.

Legacies have been left the society at different times, amounting in the aggregate to over seven thousand dollars, the income from which is appropriated to the support of the Gospel and other current expenses of the church.

In former years the business of "*hatting*" and shoe-making was extensively carried on in Ridgebury, which gave employment to a large number of people, male and female. At the present time there is no manu-

factory of any kind in the place, and the Protestant population is somewhat diminished.

Located near the church is a beautiful cemetery, containing an acre or more of ground. A part of it was used for burial purposes years before the Revolutionary war, and contains the bones of some of its heroes.

Within a few years it has been twice enlarged, and inclosed by a neat and substantial iron fence. It is now one of the pleasantest rural cemeteries of its size in the State.

An old burial-ground belonging to the Episcopal society was located on the south and east of their church edifice, on the hill three quarters of a mile south of the present cemetery, a century and a half ago. In 1860 several of the old tombstones were standing. At the present date (1878) none of them remain.

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#### PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN RIDGEBURY.

An Episcopal congregation existed in the society in the northern part of the town called Ridgebury, in the early part of the last century, and services were held contemporary with those in Ridgefield. It appears from the printed reports of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel," that prior to 1731, and for some time afterward, Ridgefield, Ridgebury, and the Oblong (Salem) were considered in some sense within the bounds of the parish or mission of

Fairfield. The church appears to have been built about the middle of the last century, and was located in an elevated position of the place, on the open space or green about half a mile south of the present Congregational church. The exact date of its erection cannot now be ascertained.

In a letter of the church-wardens and vestry-men of Salem, to the Venerable Society in London, dated August 31st, 1767, they thus state: "That we formerly united with the brethren of the Church at Ridgefield and Ridgebury, on the borders of the Connecticut Colony, and engaged the Rev. Mr. Clark to read Divine service and sermons to us on Sundays. Since Mr. Clark left us, by the advice of the Rev. Mr. Dibble (of Stamford), and the Rev. Mr. Leaming (of Norwalk), we have employed the worthy Mr. Epene-tus Townsend, who hath for some time alternately read to us and the people of Ridgefield and Ridgebury, whose exemplary life, sober conversation, and devout performance of religious offices, highly recommended him to our esteem ; and as the poor people of Ridgefield and Ridgebury, by the concurrence of the Church Wardens and Vestry in this memorial, hope to be indulged in being included under his care, having formerly a conjunction with some of the neighboring places in the Province of New York, experienced the goodness and compassion of the ' Venerable Society' in appointing the Rev. Mr. Lamson to officiate among them, being many in number, having built a Church in each of those places, Ridgefield but eight, and Ridgebury but four miles from Salem, but at such a distance from Norwalk that they expect but very little service from the Rev. Mr. Leaming ; whereupon

we have unitedly sent our respective bonds to the Rev. Dr. Auchmuty of New York, in trust, obliging ourselves to pay in each place, equal to £10 sterling per annum, in the whole amounting to £30 per annum for the time being; and we no longer expect the Society's favor than we shall continue to deserve it."

The Rev. Mr. Townsend accordingly went to England to receive Holy Orders, and returned in April, 1768. In a letter dated the 29th of September, 1768, he informed the Society "that he arrived at his Mission on the 26th of May, 1768, and was kindly received. The church-wardens, also of Salem, in the name of the people belonging to the Mission, have returned thanks to the Society for Mr. Townsend's appointment. At Salem and Ridgefield there are one hundred and fifty church people, at Ridgefield eighty."

In a letter to the society, dated September 29th, 1769, he says: "I have constantly performed Divine service equally in my three Churches of Salem, Ridgefield, and Ridgebury; in each of which places people are zealous in their attendance on public worship; and I have the pleasure to observe that through the divine blessing on my labors each of those congregations is somewhat increased."

In the same letter he says: "I beg liberty to request a favor from the Society, which may perhaps be of considerable service to me; the professors of the Church in Conn. are taxed for the support of the Minister of the Church in the same proportion as the Congregationalists for the support of their minister. This tax is levied and collected by the Congregationalists, together with their own, and by them paid to such ministers of the Church as are appointed



over them by the Society. Now Ridgefield and Ridgebury being in Conn. the Committee appointed for raising and paying the minister's rate at Ridgebury have been in some doubt whether I am entitled to the rates of the Church people there, because it is certain they were formerly under Mr. Leaming's care, and had no written appointment, or anything from under the Society's hand to convince them that the Society had now included them within this Mission. Should the Ven. Society mention Ridgefield and Ridgebury in an abstract, as parts of my Mission together with Salem ; or should they in a letter to the Church Wardens and Vestry of Ridgefield and Ridgebury, or in some other method give assurance that Ridgefield and Ridgebury belong to my Mission, it must be of advantage to me, as it would remove all doubt whether I was by the laws of that Colony entitled to the Church people's rates in those places."

The society's abstracts for 1772 say, "that Mr. Townsend, missionary at Salem, states his congregations to be increasing. Hath baptized sixty-two infants and two adults." In 1775 they say "that Mr. Townsend is constant in the performance of his duty in his own parishes, and preaches frequently in the parts adjacent. From Ladyday to Michaelmas he baptized twenty-one infants and one adult, and admitted two new communicants." The abstracts for 1776 add, "that one letter from Mr. Townsend, of September 29, 1775, gives the account of his mission, in which he hath baptized thirty infants, buried seven, and married three couple in the preceding half year."

During the interval of the Revolutionary war there was a suspension of services in Ridgebury, as in the

other stations, by the departure of the Rev. Mr. Townsend, in July 1776, as stated in the account of St. Stephen's Church. The last services held in Ridgebury, of which there is any existing record, was in 1779, where we find the following in the Ridgefield parish record.

“At a meeting of the First Episcopal Society in Ridgefield, holden at the Town House on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of Sept. 1789, the following occurs among its doings :

“Voted, That this Society shall pay a tax of two pence on the pound on the list of said Society by the first of March annually to David Perry, as long as he shall serve them in the office of a Minister.

“Voted, That the Society will consent that said Perry shall go to Ridgebury one quarter of the time.”

At a meeting of said society in the year following, the above consent, according to the record, was withdrawn.

Thus after the services of the church had been maintained with more or less frequency nearly half a century in Ridgebury, they appear to have been brought to a close, as far as any existing record remains. Removals and death wrought many changes in the congregation. Many of those remaining united with the Ridgefield church. Among its active supporters in the latter period of its history were Dr. John Andreas, the Sherwood families, Dr. Stephen Bennett, Nehemiah Sturges, Eliphalet Brush, and others. The two latter-named families united with the church in Ridgefield, and their constant attendance there is still in the recollection of many of its members.

The church edifice, which stood on the north side of

the Green, and was about the size of the first one erected in Ridgefield parish, remained until about the year 1810, when, being much out of repair, it was taken down, and its materials disposed of for other purposes, with the exception of a stone, still visible, supposed by many to have been one of the corner-stones. No vestige of its foundation now remains. The recollection of the church and its appearance is still fresh in the minds of several of our older citizens.

## CHAPTER XI.

### HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS OF THE TOWN.

THE school has always been one of the chief pillars of our nationality. The church and the school-house have stood side by side, while the preacher and the teacher have wrought together. It is also a fact, apparent to every careful observer, that nearly every college and seminary of learning in the length and breadth of our land has originated in the brain and by the hand of the minister of Christ. Especially is this true in New England, and of no State truer than of Connecticut.

Scarcely had the log cabin indicated the halt of the emigrant, before the log school-house as surely indicated the purpose and plan of the settler. Every village and hamlet had its school and its church, and as a rule the latter was the parent of the former. This was the case in this town. It is not certainly known when the first school was opened, nor when the first church was gathered ; the earliest records of the town reveal the fact that both existed. The settlers came to the town with their faith in God and their faith in education already established, and the one immediately gave rise to a church and the other to a school.

The first reference made to the schools of the town was in the year 1721, when " it was voted at a town meeting that eight pounds shall be raised for y<sup>e</sup> support of a school."

In the year 1725 General Assembly passed an act releasing the citizens of the town from the payment of taxes, "provided they draw no money out of the treasury for the school."

In 1742 the town by a major vote released the people of the new patent (Ridgebury) from paying any tax to the town school on condition that they should keep a school among themselves six months yearly.

At this time there was in the town but one school-house, and that was located nearly opposite Mr. Abner Gilbert's residence ; there was, however, another school taught in the town-house.

That this was not the first school-house erected in the town is proven by the fact that as early as 1726 steps were taken in a town meeting to repair the "school-house ;" which school-house was located on the Church Green, near where the present Congregational church edifice now stands.

So nearly as can be at present determined this first school-house was used for a meeting-house until 1726, and for this purpose was at one time enlarged by an addition to the east end. This addition (or new part, as it was called) was afterwards (when the Congregational church was built) taken off and removed, and the remaining or original part repaired and used exclusively for school purposes.

School continued to be taught in this school-house until the first town-house was built, which was in 1743, when the school was removed to that house, as will be seen by an action of the town in 1746. On the 18th September, 1744, this old school-house was sold at public auction.

The first town-house stood on the corner south of



Mrs. Irad Hawley's, and was afterwards moved to some point which cannot at present be determined.

The action in reference to its removal reads, "The Town House shall be moved and set a little Southerly of where the Pound now stands." The probability is that this new location was immediately across the Green, a little south of Mrs. Nathan Smith's. The following will throw some light on the manner in which schools at that early day were maintained :

At a sheep meeting held in Ridgefield, December 24th, 1742, it was voted by a majority "that the money coming for the hire of the Sheep the last year shall be given as a Bounty to help maintain the Town School for ever, and when the money is gathered it shall be delivered to the committee that is appointed to take care of the bounty money given by the Government to support y<sup>e</sup> school, And ordered by the above said vote to let out the said money as y<sup>e</sup> money is that comes from the government, and to improve the use thereof to pay it towards y<sup>e</sup> maintenance of said town school forever.

"Test      TIMOTHY KEELER, *Clerk.*"

This sheep hire is easily explained. Until about the year 1760 there were a considerable number of sheep in the town, owned by the town—Mr. Goodrich says about two thousand—which were kept by a shepherd in the summer months, and regularly twice in the week let to the highest bidder to lay in his plough land during the night season, which method of enriching the land it is stated "caused the worn land to produce excellent crops of wheat of the best quality." The money thus obtained was that which was appropriated by the town for school purposes. The following receipt appears on town records :

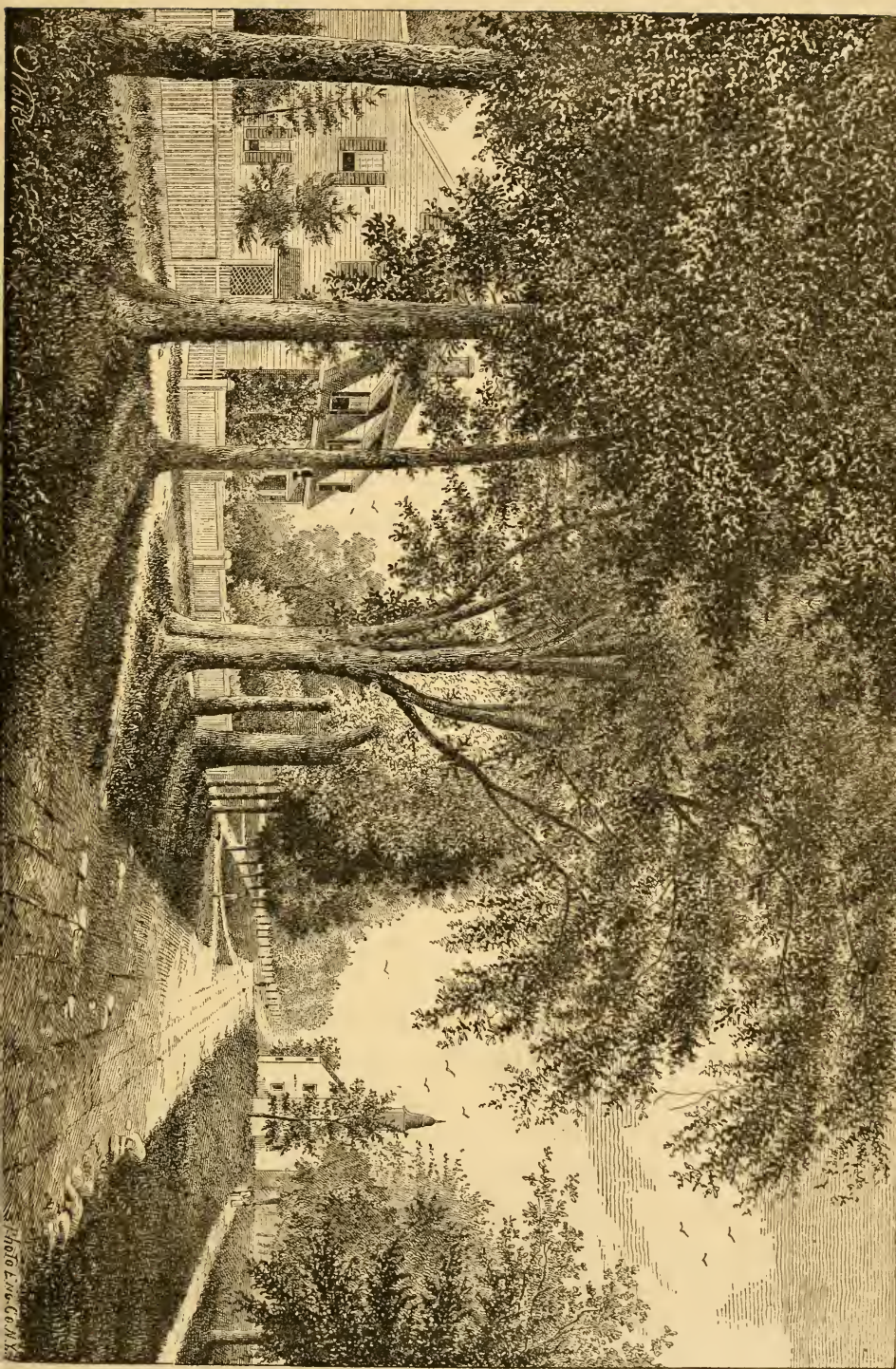
“ Ridgefield April 28<sup>th</sup> 1743, then received of Capt. Richard Olmstead and Matthew Benedict, Committee of the Donation Money Given by the Government, y<sup>e</sup> sum of 25£ 14s and 6d in order to pay the School Master. We say we received it, as Witness our hands,

JOSEPH KEELER, } *School*  
JAMES BENEDICT, } *Committee.*”

Rev. Samuel Goodrich says in his history of the town, written in A.D. 1800, that the schools of the town “are maintained 1<sup>st</sup> in part by the produce of the sales of lands in Litchfield County by the State and appropriated to the schools. 2<sup>nd</sup>. By the produce of an excise duty laid on Rum and Tea, but the act proving unpopular was never carried into general execution, the money paid in by this town was returned and appropriated for the benefit of schools. 3<sup>d</sup>. By the 40/ on the thousand, as it is called. 4<sup>th</sup>. By the produce of the sales of the western lands, and lastly, in case of deficiency, by a tax on the scholars.”

Mr. Goodrich also says that the “wages given to masters is from 15 to 18 dollars per month, according to number of scholars and the ability of the teachers. There is taught in our schools Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Grammar, some Catechising, and a little manners. It has been remarked that since the visiting committee have attended to their duty, our schools are under better regulation and our scholars make greater proficiency. There are a number of young people who have been taught in our schools who have gone into other parts and taught with applause. Board for children is from seventy-five cents to one dollar per week, and tuition from fifty cents to one dollar per quarter.”





CHAS. E. CO.

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“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield March 18<sup>th</sup> 1746 at y<sup>e</sup> said meeting Serg<sup>t</sup> James Northrup by a Major vote was chosen Moderator.

“ The s<sup>d</sup> meeting by their Major vote do agree and order that there shall be two women Schools be kept from y<sup>e</sup> first of April next till y<sup>e</sup> first of Octob<sup>r</sup> ensuing, y<sup>e</sup> one of s<sup>d</sup> Schools to be kept at y<sup>e</sup> Town house and y<sup>e</sup> other at y<sup>e</sup> house that was built for that purpose, a little northward of Jonah Smith<sup>a</sup>.

“ Test      TIMOTHY KEELER, *Registr.*”

“ Ridgefield April y<sup>e</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1749 then Received of Capt Richard Olmsted, Matthew Benedict, School Com<sup>tee</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> Donation money y<sup>e</sup> sum of Twenty six Pounds twelve shillings money in order to pay for y<sup>e</sup> keeping School or Schools in testimony hereof we do set our hands

“ SAM<sup>ll</sup> SMITH  
“ THOMAS HYATT      } *Selectmen.*”  
“ JAMES NORTHROP

“ At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield by Adjournment from Decem<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> to Decem<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> AD 1753 Matthew Benedict being Moderator it was Voted in s<sup>d</sup> meeting that there shall be two Men Schools kept 3 Months between this time and y<sup>e</sup> first of April next one of them at y<sup>e</sup> Town house and y<sup>e</sup> other at y<sup>e</sup> School house near L<sup>t</sup> Jonah Smith<sup>a</sup>. It was also voted in s<sup>d</sup> meeting that there shall be three School Mistresses provided and put into Schools y<sup>e</sup> first of April next and continued therein until y<sup>e</sup> first of October next, one of them to be kept in y<sup>e</sup> School house near L<sup>t</sup> Jonah Smiths, one of them in y<sup>e</sup> Town house, and one of them in or near Ben<sup>n</sup> Rockwells house.

“ It was voted in s<sup>d</sup> meeting that two Men Schools shall be kept by two masters in (s<sup>d</sup> houses or places where y<sup>e</sup> above said men Schools are to be kept) from y<sup>e</sup> first of October next till y<sup>e</sup> next Annual Town Meeting.”

In the year 1761 five schools were taught in the town, one at the town-house, and the remaining four at houses built for the purpose ; one at West Lane, one at Titicus, one at Limestone, and one at Florida.

At a town meeting held December 28th, 1761, it was “ Voted that there be five Schools kept within the Limits of this Society for three months viz. one at the



house near John Northrups J<sup>ur</sup>, one at the Town House, one at the house near Benj<sup>a</sup> Stebbins Jr, one at Limestone; and one near Platt's Mill, Provided there be a sufficient number of scholars at each school, to be Determined by the School Commi<sup>tee</sup> Capt. Daniel Bradley, Aaron Northrup, Tho<sup>s</sup> Hawley, Theophilus Stebbins, and Obadiah Platt were Chosen a School Committee.

“Granted a Rate or Tax of three farthings upon the Pound to Defray the Charges of the Schools and Society, to be paid by the first Day of May next.

“John Smith Ju<sup>r</sup> was Chosen a Collector to Collect the Society Rate and pay the same into the Hands of the Commi<sup>tee</sup> that has the charge of the School Bonds viz Sam Olmsted Esq Capt Richard Olmsted and Stephen Smith.”

On the 22d of December, 1762, it was voted, “That there shall be 25 Scholars to attend each School in the Society one Day with the other as long as the Schools are Continued.”

On the 20th of December, 1763, at a meeting of the First Ecclesiastical Society it was voted that the schools be continued the same as the previous year, with the additional clause: “Liberty is allowed by the Major vote of the meeting to set up Six Schools in the Society at or near the Places where they were kept last year and to be kept by Masters for three Months, and each School to draw an equal Share of the ten Shilling upon the thousand allowed by the Government for the use of Schools and the Interest upon the Donation, provided they are kept two months compleat.”

On the 14th of December, 1767, it was voted in the

said society meeting that the "Society be Divided into Districts for Schooling."

So far as can be gathered such a division had never before been definitely made. Previous to this schools were located in different parts of the parish, seemingly without regard to definite limits.

In 1773 it was voted at a society's meeting "that schools may be kept in the same places, and under the same regulations as last year, with this addition, that each Committee man warn the people in the District where he resides to meet at Time and Place, and the major part of their votes shall Determine who shall be the master to keep their school, and the Committee shall be concluded thereby and hire the master. Said district shall by their major vote order him to hire; and also with this reserve that the district up at Tytichus have Liberty to keep their school at the house near to James Smith's, or at any other place said District shall agree upon."

"At a Society Meeting held by adjournment Dec<sup>r</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> AD 1784.

"Voted That this Society be and is divided into five whole districts and two half districts Voted, That all that part of the Society, beginning at and including L<sup>t</sup> Wilsons Dwelling House, and running Southerly including Esq<sup>r</sup> Benedict's Dwelling House and all the houses joining on the West side of Town Street, as far as Norwalk line then Easterly on said line as far as James Ressequie house (including it) thence Northerly taking in the dwelling houses joining the East side of the Road to the west side of the Great Swamp, as far North as Capt Scotts House up the Lane to L<sup>t</sup> Wilsons aforesaid, be called the first District.

"Also, to begin at the North West corner of the first District, to run Easterly along the North Line of the same to the Great Swamp then North along the West side of the same to the Island Bridge then over the same, including John Waters and Isaac Sherwoods Houses, as far North as Waters' Barn, then a Westerly course to the mouth of the Lane south of Jasper Meads House, then a strait course to Titichus

Bridge then Westerly the South side of King's House to the road South of Daniel Dauchy's House—then Westerly along the middle of the road to the State line, then southerly along said line to Conclins Saw Mill then Easterly a strait line, to said North West-corner of the first District, to be called the Second District.

“ Also, to begin at the River Westerly of John Waters Barn to run Northerly on the East side of Gideon Scotts Dwelling House, to Ridgebury Line then Westerly along said line to the State line, then Southerly along s<sup>d</sup> State line to the North West corner of the Second District, then Easterly along the North line thereof, to the River where it begun to be called the third District.

“ Also To begin at the South West Corner of the first District—and to run Northerly along the West line thereof, to the North West corner of said first District, then Westerly along the south line of the second District to the State line, then Southerly along the State line to Norwalk Line, then Easterly along Norwalk line to s<sup>d</sup> South West corner of first District ; To be called the fourth District.

“ Also To begin at the South East Corner of the Third District, to run as far Northerly on the East line thereof as the turn of the river then to run East to the River, then along the river to Resseque's Saw Mill, then to run Easterly a strait line across the South end of Burts pond to Redding Line, then Southerly along s<sup>d</sup> line, to the Cross Highway leading to Kains then Westerly taking in the Houses on the South side of said Highway to Nathan Burr's (including it), then Westerly a strait course to the South East Corner of the Second District, then Northerly on the East line of the Second District to Waters Barn, then Westerly to said South East Corner of the third District at the river where it begun, To be called the fifth District.

“ Also To begin at the North East Corner of the fifth District and to run Westerly along the North line thereof till it comes to the East line of the third District, then Northerly along the East thereof to Ridgebury line ; then Easterly along s<sup>d</sup> line to Danbury line, then Southerly Westerly and Easterly along said Danbury and Reading lines to said North East corner of the fifth District

“ To be called the first half District.

“ Also To begin at the South East corner of the first District and to run Northerly along the East line thereof, to the southwest corner of the fifth District then Easterly along the South line thereof to Reading line then southerly along said line to Norwalk line then Westerly along Norwalk line to the South East Corner of said first District

“ To be called the Second half District.

“ Voted, That the Public Monies (by Law appropriated for the benefit of schools) belonging to this Society be equally divided, between and to the Several School Districts in said Society and that each whole District one Sixth part thereof and Each half District one twelvth part thereof ; Provided Each whole District, keeps Schools three Month in Each Year ; and Each half District, six weeks in Each Year ;—and in case any whole or half District fails of keeping a school as aforesaid ; then the Moneys belonging to them (in case they had kept School as aforesaid) to be divided as aforesaid to and among those Districts—that keep a School as aforesaid.

“ Voted That Jesse Benedict, Benjamin Smith Job Smith John Benedict Jr Michael Warring Joseph Mead and Robert Edmond, be and are appointed School Committees, for the Several Districts to which they belong for the Year Ensuing.

“ At a Town Meeting held April y<sup>e</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1786 voted

“ That the Proprietors of the Frame set up for a School House near y<sup>e</sup> Dwelling house of Jeremiah Wilson may have the privilege of appropriating the present Town house towards finishing said School House ; provided the Proprietors of said School House fully vest the Town and the first Society with the privilege of holding all their necessary Town Proprietors, First Society and Freemans Meetings therein and that they (the proprietors of s<sup>d</sup> School House) will finish and Compleat said School House and make it Convenient by seating y<sup>e</sup> same.”

The above house was known as the Independent School-House.

“ At a meeting of the Proprietors of the Independent School House holden at the House of Widow Clemence Smith on April y<sup>e</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> 1786 Silas Hull Moderator and Jacob Smith Jun Clerk protempore of said meeting, Voted

“ That the proprietors of y<sup>e</sup> said Independant School House will take and Appropriate the now Town House, agreeably to the vote of the Town Respecting said Town and School House and do wholly and fully Invest the Town with all the Privileges respecting said School House, which are Mentioned in the Town Vote respecting y<sup>e</sup> same.”

This independent school-house was located in Mr. Lounsbury's yard, directly in front of his present carriage-house. It seems to have been a school of higher

grade than the common district schools, and for upwards of thirty years was taught by Mr. Samuel Stebbins.

In 1799 there were ten schools kept in the limits of the first society, in as many houses built for the purpose. The number of scholars at that time taken by the Visiting Committee was four hundred and thirty-three.

Since then other districts have been formed and other schools established.

The following are the numbers and names of the several school districts as at present existing in the town :

District No.	1.	Scotland.
“	“	2. Bennett's Farms.
“	“	3. Limestone.
“	“	4. Titicus.
“	“	5. West Mountain.
“	“	6. Center.
“	“	7. West Lane.
“	“	8. Whipstick.
“	“	9. Flat Rock.
“	“	10. Branchville.
“	“	11. Florida.
“	“	12. Farmingville.
“	“	13. North Ridgebury.
“	“	14. South Ridgebury.

The number of scholars enumerated in the list of the town in the month of January, 1878, as of school age, is four hundred and thirty-four.

Within the last three or four years new school-



houses have been built in the Branchville, Whipstick, North Ridgebury, and South Ridgebury districts.

The school-houses in the Scotland and Limestone districts have been almost entirely rebuilt, and the one in the Center district enlarged, newly seated, and much improved. Of the school-houses in the other districts, some are in good repair, others need to be rebuilt or otherwise improved.

The enumeration of the children of school age the last year (1877) was four hundred and twenty-seven ; the whole number who attended the schools was four hundred and six ; the registered number in the winter was three hundred and fifty-nine ; in the summer, three hundred and nine ; and the average attendance during the year was two hundred and twenty-nine.

The following persons comprise the present Board of Education for the town :

Dr. Daniel L. Adams, Dr. William S. Todd, Rev. David D. Bishop, Archibald Y. Paddock, Gould Rockwell, Daniel S. Sholes, Charles B. Northrup, Lewis E. Smith, and William H. Beers. Daniel L. Adams, President of the Board ; William S. Todd, Secretary ; William S. Todd, Rev. David D. Bishop, Archibald Y. Paddock, Acting School Visitors.

Select schools have been a prominent feature of the town almost from its first settlement until the past few years. In some cases these schools have been conducted by the pastors of the churches, and in others by professional teachers. They have generally been taught in buildings erected for the purpose, although in a few instances private houses have been occupied.

For many years several of the neighboring towns

looked to Ridgefield in most part for their educational privileges. Young men have been educated here who afterwards filled some of the most important positions of public trust or professional responsibility. At present there is a dearth of such schools, although sadly needed, Miss Hurlbutt's school for young children being the only exception to the rule.

A decided improvement in many features of the district schools, however, has tended to make up the deficiency. Through the deep interest and zeal of our excellent school committee, great improvement has been made not only in the school buildings, but in the libraries, the desks, and all the school-room furniture. And it is to be hoped that the day is not distant when an academy or a first-class graded school shall form one of the most attractive and useful features of our beautiful village.





RESIDENCE OF MRS. NATHAN SMITH.



## CHAPTER XII.

### RIDGEFIELD IN 1800.

IN the library of the Athenæum, at Hartford, Ct., there is a manuscript work entitled, "A Statistical Account of Ridgefield, in the County of Fairfield, drawn up by Rev. Samuel Goodrich from Minutes furnished by a Number of his Parishioners, A.D. 1800."

Mr. Goodrich was pastor of the Congregational Church in Ridgefield for twenty-five years, and was the father of S. G. Goodrich, Esq.

The following extracts are taken from the above history, through the kindness of the Library Association, and are now, many of them, published for the first :

"In consequence of the exchange made by this State with the State of New York, in 1733 for part of Stamford and Greenwich, of what is commonly called the Oblong, one mile and three-quarters in width, the whole length of the first patent was cut off from Ridgefield, the whole town therefore contains but two located societies, being the first or old society and Ridgebury. The town in its present form is nearly in the common figure of a coffin. The first society contains about 16,000 acres, and Ridgebury society in this town about 11,000. The whole township is about fifteen miles in length, the width at south end about three miles and three-quarters, at about one-third of the length northward it is about five miles wide, and at the north end only half a mile ; bounded south by Norwalk, east by Reading and part of Danbury,



north by Danbury and New Fairfield, and west by the State of New York. There were in the year 1799 ten (10) schools kept in the first society by masters in as many school-houses built for that purpose, and the number of scholars taken by the visiting committee were 433.

“ There are three foreigners in the town who are paupers, viz., two men and one woman ; one of the men, named *Yabcomb*, was from Wales ; the other, named *Jagger*, is an old man about 95 years, an Englishman, who served under the Duke of Cumberland at the battle of Culloden in 1745, and was in Flanders with the regiment previous to that battle.

“ There is the appearance of sundry Indian graves at a place commonly called Nooricus Ridge. There is one mountain which retains its Indian name, *Asproom* (high or lofty), and there are several ponds, as Mammenusquah, Nisopack, Aokeets, and Umperwauge. There are no Indians at present living in the town, except one who has learned the mason trade and has married a white woman. One died in the town about two years since at a great age, not certainly known, but supposed ninety-six or more.

“ The general face of the land is gently swelling ridges, extending from north to south, though there are some broken abrupt rocky precipices, and a considerable quantity of very stony land, which is yet and probably will be reserved to grow wood and timber upon. The soil on the ridges are generally composed of loam and clay, and there is a considerable quantity in some parts of the town of a light limestone soil, but little of gravel. The low lands, or swamps, of which there are several, are generally a deep black soil made by the fallen timber and leaves, and the wash from the ridges, but they suffer much for the want of drainage. The soil was originally very fertile, and produced plenty of excellent wheat, which has generally failed since the appearance of the

Hessian fly, though now and then it does well on some favorite spots.

“It at present produces good rye and Indian corn, a considerable more than for the consumption of the inhabitants; flax, large quantities of oats, buckwheat, beans, and peas. Onions grow as well in some open gardens as in any part of the State. The land is very good for grass.

“The middle of the township lies about fourteen miles from the landing at Norwalk, and is equally distant on the highest land between the rivers Hudson and Ausatonuck, and in particular the hill or ridge lying west of and near the town street, is, by way of eminence called the *High Ridge* (Indian name Cando), from which, in clear weather, the mountains west of the Hudson, and the West Rock, near New Haven, may be clearly seen, and the Sound for fifty or sixty miles. The waters rise at the foot of this hill and run in different directions, discharging into the Sound at Fairfield, Norwalk, and Stamford, and into the river Hudson by the river *Titicus*, and through the river Croton. The waters also which rise in this town discharge into the Ousetonuck at the great falls in New Milford. There are, therefore, no streams of any considerable magnitude and consequence before they leave the limits of the town, and thus all are frequently during the summer months too small to carry mills. There are, however, some ponds in the town that have by improvement been made sufficient to answer the necessities of the inhabitants and more. The town being a hilly country furnishes a number of excellent small springs of water, which is light or heavy according to the soil from which they flow. Some of the springs have in the course of ten or fifteen years changed the quality of the water, and some few wells, from what cause is not certainly known; it is, however, in one well attributed to its being not long used. The most remarkable spring is in the southerly

part of the town, and is commonly called *Silver Spring*; the water is very cold and heavy. It discharges about one-fourth water sufficient to carry a grist-mill, and is not materially affected by the freshet or drought. The wells on the height of the ridges are commonly from thirty to forty feet, those in the valleys from twelve to thirty; but in time of severe drought many wells fail of water. There have been but two instances of aqueducts in the town, and those only to supply a single family each, which experiments have been made in the course of this summer, and are likely to answer their design. The expense by the rod is about 4s. There are a great many small streams in all parts of the town, but most of them in a dry season fail, except near the springs which produce them.

“ There are in most of the mountains, amongst the rocks and stones, appearances of sulphur and iron. There has not yet any bed been opened that promises to pay the expense of working. There has been several attempts to dig after the precious metals, and a considerable quantity of the ore has been carried away; but to collect any quantity of the metal has proved impracticable. There are several beds of limestone of good qualities, and some quarries of a grayish and sky-blue stone which is serviceable in building, but no freestone.

“ The original timber consisted of the several sorts of walnuts and oaks. Butternuts are plenty, with maple beech, ash, dogwood, elm, sassafras, and a number of shrubs, as whortleberries, bayberries, etc., stately spruce trees. In the first settlement of the town the inhabitants annually burnt over the high rough land for the benefit of the wild feed that grew on them, which was a great injury to the old trees, and entirely prevented the young from growing; but since that practice has ceased, our rough lands have a most beautiful thriving young growth coming on, which promises plenty of timber and fuel. There is a considerable number of the sugar maple trees grow-

ing, but no more sugar made than is consumed by the makers. The common method of perforating the tree is either with a twist auger or a narrow chisel. Our woods yield lumber for our maple tubs, etc., and some small quantity for exportation, as heading, staves, and hoops. It is probable with prudent management this town will produce sufficient wood for fuel for the inhabitants for a century to come. The price of wood for fuel has not yet been more in the street than one dollar per load, containing half a cord. There have been several forges set up in the town, and near it, within a few years past ; but it is probable that they will soon cease on account of the extraordinary consumption of wood, having in a short time more than doubled the price of wood land in the extremities of the town. There are five grist-mills in the town, two fulling mills, and several saw-mills carried by water, which answer for the inhabitants, but carry on no business on an extensive scale.

“ The price of land has gradually increased since the first improvement, but is not so high as in the neighboring towns, for the reasons that there are no gatherings of the people for or on account of the public business in the town, and our rivers are so small, being at the head of them, that no water-works can be carried on to profit on an extensive plan. There are but few mechanics and manufacturers, traders, or men in the learned professions, to the number of people who follow agriculture, and most of the inhabitants raise provisions for their own consumption and some for exportation, for which reason the price of labor or provisions is not generally so high as it is in more populous places.

“ The people generally manufacture their own linen and woollen cloths in their families, using all their wool and most of their flax.

“ It is supposed that the quantity of flax-seed annually sent from this town is from 500 to 1000 bushels, according as the season is more or less productive.



The old people love turnips yet better than potatoes, and there are considerable quantities used every year—from 2000 to 4000 bushels a year; they make good feed for sheep and cows that give milk. Potatoes are very much used, and increased attempts are making to raise them for market; but the distance from market is so great that it is not expected the practice will be general.

“Our teams used for transportation and the several branches of industry and husbandry have been generally composed of oxen and horses together, and our vehicles for carriage have been carts and sleds; but within a few years past wagons drawn by horses have greatly multiplied, and the cart, harrow, and plough are more frequently drawn by oxen alone. The increase of cattle is doubtless an advantage to so rough a country as ours, and the increase of horses, except for sale and exportation, a disadvantage to us, if not to every country.

“Pleasure sleighs and those for lumber have greatly multiplied since the Revolution. Our grain is universally thrashed with flails, and cleaned with a fan and riddled.

“The town being originally much covered with chestnut timber, that was for about fifty years chiefly used for fencing; since that time the post fences have gradually been replaced with stone, and at present there is but very little timber cut for that purpose, except for posts and bars, and there is probably movable stone enough for the purpose of fencing.

“This town, by the mode of laying it out at first, was cut into small pieces or tracts of land, and the people being generally husbandmen, scarce any man has more than he and his family want to improve, and of course we have no tenanted lands. There are some people who crop it, as is termed with us, that is, plough and sow for a certain share; the common custom is to the labor two-thirds and to the land one.

“There has been for the last forty years a constant



emigration of the people born in the town to the different parts of the United States.

“ In our Revolution many of the young people left the town, and some of them now reside in the British dominion ; some have returned and several are dead. The people of this place have hitherto been so favored with the grace of God that there has never been one convicted of any crime punishable by laws of the land with death.

“ There have been two instances of suicide, natives, in the prime of life, one male and the other female ; both were married and had families.

“ Until about the year 1760 there was a considerable number of good sheep in the town, and they were kept by a shepherd in the summer months, and regularly twice in the week let to the highest bidder to lay on his plough land during the night season, which method of manuring caused the worn land to produce excellent crops of wheat of the best quality, and great quantities of the land belonging to the proprietors was kept for the sheep to feed upon ; but about that time (1760) the proprietors agreed to divide their interests in said several lands, and they were soon fenced up, since which time the sheep have gradually decreased, and would have become almost extinct but for the encouragement and protection of the State legislature.

“ There are probably about half as many sheep in the town as there are people. It would be but a venture to guess the number of swinē ; there may be not far from 1400 or 1500, and there are from 150 to 200 barrels of pork annually carried out of the town, and about as much beef. There may be from 250 to 300 firkins of butter exported and half the weight of cheese (9000), and about one hundred (100) head of fat cattle driven to market on their legs to New York.

“ The making of butter has much increased within twenty years. As it can now be carried fresh to New

York market, the price is more than three times than it then was.

“ There is a good tan-work in this town, in which about fifty vats are occupied. It has, however, been the custom for almost all the farmers to tan their own leather, and do many other parts of mechanical business. There is also a hatting manufactory, in which about five or six workmen are employed to good advantage ; it furnishes the inhabitants with hats and sends abroad work to a handsome amount. There are likewise two boot and shoe factories, which will probably send abroad 5000 pairs of boots and shoes ; the materials they work are chiefly brought from New York or abroad. Cabinet-work is done in town for the inhabitants and some of the neighboring towns. It has already been observed that the inhabitants manufacture all the wool they raise, and a considerable quantity is brought from abroad.

“ A large quantity of ducking (not for sale, but for the southern market), perhaps 3000 yards at 1s. per yard, is annually made and sold. The great quantities of cotton cloths, as muslin, etc., imported and sold at a low price, has a tendency to discourage making American cloth, though many make linen and exchange with the shopkeepers for cotton goods.

“ There are no breweries in this town, and the general custom, which used formerly be practised, of making small beer for family use, is almost entirely neglected, except for sake of the lees to make bread.

“ There were formerly deer, bears, wolves, panthers, and wild-cats in our woods, and beaver in our ponds, but they are now extinct. We have red and grey foxes, some few racoons, wood-chucks, grey and striped squirrels. There were at the first settlement great numbers of rattlesnakes, and snakes equally poisonous, but they are almost destroyed. One method for their destruction was the turning of swine among them, which devoured them. About the year 1780, and for several succeeding years, the

canker-worm destroyed our apples and apple-trees in many of our orchards to a very alarming degree ; but about the year 1794, in the spring season, soon after the leaves and worms made their appearance, there came into the orchards several flocks of uncommon birds, a little larger than a blue-bird, of a brown color, and picked the worms from the trees, as was also the case with a number of flocks of pigeons, which greatly checked them, and the frost which happens sometimes the latter end of May entirely destroyed them, so we have not one canker-worm since that has been heard of.

“ Respecting the bird, it has never been seen with us since, except it be the one that appears in the winter, which, if it is the same, is considerably changed in its colour.

“ There were a few barberry bushes in town that were for a long time kept for medical purposes ; the great blast of wheat about the year 1775 induced people totally to destroy them.

“ It is an undoubted fact that a bunch of those bushes, not more than an armful, blasted several fields of wheat, so as totally to destroy some and much injure others, at half a mile’s distance. As to the cause of their blasting, it is conjectured that it is their sourness, as it is observed that wheat delights in light sweet soils, which naturally produces the white and red clover. It has also been observed that wheat fields lying near swamps producing cranberries have been blasted by them ; but it is necessary, in order to produce this destructive effect, that the weather be moist and the wind blow in a direction from the bushes or swamp to the fields of grain, when the noxious effluvia which the bushes emit fills the air, and being of such a nature that as soon as it comes in contact with the straw it poisons it, and destroys it so as to afford no nourishment to the kernel.

“ There are two places or houses built for public worship in the first society, and two in Ridgebury,

one of which, the Episcopal, has gone to decay. One of the houses in the old society is used by the Congregationalists and the other by the Episcopalians. Mr. Thomas Hawley, from Northampton, was settled in the first society soon after the town was settled in the year 1714, and was their first pastor, and continued till the year 1739, when he deceased in the prime of life. He was an able divine, a man of great frankness and sociability, an excellent scholar, and was very useful to the town, not only as a minister but in a civil capacity, serving them as their town-clerk, and doing almost all their writing business until his death.

“As an encouragement for his settlement in the ministry, in the then infant state of the town, he received one twenty-ninth part of the land to himself and his heirs. Some of his descendants are now living in the town. His salary was small at first, but increased gradually as the people became more able ; but it may be remarked as a capital error in the original proprietors of this town, as in many others, in giving away the right of soil. It is probable that had what was given to Mr. Hawley been appropriated to the ministry and for religious purposes, that the interest at this day would have defrayed all the expenses of the society. Some may perhaps think it best, and that it endears a people and their minister supporting him by tax. Mr. Jonathan Ingersoll succeeded Mr. Hawley in the ministry. He was from Milford. He was ordained in the year 1740, and fulfilled for many years his duty with ability, ingrafting himself in the affections of the people, and was universally beloved and esteemed. Some years before his decease a shock of the palsy weakened his body and mind, but he continued to do his duty in office until near the time of his death, which was on 2<sup>d</sup> October, 1778, after which time there was a succession of temporary preachers until 6<sup>th</sup> of July, 1786, when Mr. Samuel Goodrich, of Durham, was ordained, and is the present pastor. It is worthy of remark that the people in this town have



always been attached to their ministers, and great harmony and peace has subsisted between them.

“The Episcopalians built their first house of public worship in the year 1740; they never had a clergyman to themselves steadily, but have successively employed a number; first, Mr. Caner, then Mr. Beach, Mr. Fowle, Mr. Townsend, Mr. De Lancey, Dr. Perry, and lastly Mr. Butler, who is esteemed a worthy man and gives good satisfaction to his people.

“Ridgebury society was set off in the year 1763, and Mr. Samuel Camp was ordained to the pastorate care of the Congregational church in the year, who still continues their minister. He is a man of a feeble bodily constitution, a critical scholar, a sound and orthodox divine, retentive memory, and great logical abilities. There has been in years past a number of people who call themselves Baptists, who showed much zeal in religion and met in private houses for worship. At the present they are much on the decline. A few have joined the Methodists, whose preachers, though very zealous, have made but little impression on the minds of the people in this town. Almost all the people attend public worship with the Congregationalists or Episcopalians, and there is and has been for a long time past the utmost harmony and friendship prevailing between the several denominations of Christians here, who frequently worship together and evince the efficacy of that spirit whose leading character is *charity*. A spirit of litigation has also greatly abated, and it is worthy of remark that at a late session of the County Court for this county there was not one man from the town during the whole term except one of the judges, and we never had any man living in the town who was a lawyer by profession.

“The church under the care of Mr. Goodrich consists of 130 members.

“The whole number of inhabitants belonging to the congregations is 850.



“ There have been 1750 baptisms since the year 1743, and 170 pay taxes to the Congregationalists.

“ About the time that Paine's ‘ Age of Reason ’ came abroad, Infidelity presented itself to view, and like Milton's description of Death ‘ Black, it stood as night, fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,’ the horror of its features disgusted the people to such a degree that it has not yet had one advocate in this town.

“ The salary given Mr. Ingersoll was £75, to Mr. Goodrich £115 and 20 cords of wood annually. The list of the town 51,000 doll<sup>s</sup>., of the first society 22,000 doll<sup>s</sup>. Public worship is here maintained by tax only.

“ Schools in this town are maintained, 1<sup>st</sup> in part by the produce of the sale of lands in Litchfield County by the State, and appropriated to the school ; 2<sup>d</sup> by the produce of an excise duty laid on Rum and Tea, but the act proving unpopular was never carried into general execution—the money paid in by this town was returned and appropriated for the benefit of schools ; 3<sup>d</sup> by the 40s. on the thousand as it is commonly called ; 4<sup>th</sup> by the produce of the sales of the western lands, and lastly, in case of deficiency, by a tax on the schollars.

“ The wages given to masters is from 15 to 8 dollars per month, according to number of schollars and the abillity of the teachers. There is taught in our schools Reading, writing, arithmetic, and Grammar, some catichising and a little manners. It has been remarked, that since the visiting committee have attended to their duty, our schools are under better regulation and our schollars make greater proficiency. There are a number of young people who have been taught in our schools who have gone into other parts and taught with applause. Board for children is from 75 cents to one dollar per week, and tuition from 50 cents to one dollar per quarter.

“ The number of poor who receive aid from the town do not exceed 10 or 12, of which number not

more than 2 or 3 receive their whole support. Those that do are foreigners, being those mentioned before, one of which was a laborer and the other a soldier who wrought jet work in cedar since he has been in this country till he was near 80 years old, and he will to this day, being in the 96th year of his age, sing a martial air he learned in Flanders and cry 'God save King George.' Those who receive partial aid do some work, and receive some assistance from relations and particular friends. The old soldier has been bid off to the lowest bidder for several years from 7s. 6d. to 6s. per week. We have no poor that are chargeable but what became so by bodily imbecility.

"We had the last year not more than five Taverns in town, though in years past we have had double that number, they are not much frequented by the inhabitants of the town. The grog-drinkers and Brandy tipplers have found a way to be supplied at a cheaper rate than they can obtain at licensed inns, and it is necessary that they should be prudent.

"In regard to climate the height of our situation in the atmosphere and the descent of the land to the north renders the air, though cold, exceedingly salubrious. Different disorders have prevailed in different seasons, owing to different causes. The main street in the town being on the highest land, or near it, has ever been healthy; near the low lands and ponds in the skirts of the town the fever and ague and other fevers have prevailed. There are some instances of nervous fevers almost every year, which generally proves mortal. The dysentery sometimes visits us, but has never made great ravages. Symptoms of putridity have appeared in some fevers, and have in some instances proved suddenly fatal, yet never been alarming. The small-pox has been familiar, and has in a great measure left its terrors since the practice of inoculation, which has been generally adopted by almost all the inhabitants. 3 or 400 have had it in a season, out of which number from 1

to 2 have died, it is a very small expense. People here generally marry young, and are very prolific; in six families a number of years since, all living in one neighborhood, there were 75 children.

“The number of births greatly exceed the number of deaths. There may have been 4000 since the settlement of the town. The annual number of deaths on an average for ten years past will not exceed 20; about 1 in a hundred of the inhabitants. There has been one instance of a man who deceased in town 102 years old, he was born at East Chester in the State of New York, and came into this town in the 44<sup>th</sup> year, by name Richard Osborn. He was a very religious man, slender in body, had been a justice of the peace and deacon in the prime of life, was temperate in his habits and diet, but animated in his passions. There have been many instances of persons living over 90, and great numbers who survive 80, and considerably active. There are now living in the town 3 over 90, and 20 who are 80 or more.

“In October a remarkable thunder gust, tornado, or hurricane, passed through the northerly part of this society, and the south part of Ridgebury, destroying everything in its course in this and the neighboring towns. Eleven buildings were nearly destroyed, and three or four entirely. Several dwelling-houses were damaged in a surprising manner, but none of the inhabitants were destroyed or very materially injured.

“Our elevated situation occasions the earth to be covered much deeper and longer with snow than the neighboring towns, but we are not exposed to inundations, being so near the head of the streams. There have been for several years great swarms of insects (especially the Rosebug) moving to the northward and northwest—some have supposed them to be the Hessian Fly. For several years past a sort of caterpillar worm has prevailed upon the trees, both fruit trees and forest trees. In the latter part of summer

especially, the wild cherry-tree, many of the red and black ash trees have been destroyed in the swamps and low grounds, and if not checked in their progress by Providence threaten wide destruction.

“Our little town has not much to boast of superior genius or intellects, though nature has been by no means niggardly to us in the distribution of her powers. The natives of the town are undoubtedly endued with as good natural capacities as any people on earth, though few of them have any great degree of acquired learning. The person who happens to be most employed by his fellow freemen in public business soon claims, and has the most notice. And we have many persons who never mounted the public stage of business, who only want to be called up and employed to exhibit talents which by experience would shine.

“Our various mechanics and artificers improve gradually in the beauty if not in the strength of their various manufactures. In regard to the vices of the people, though it might be prudent to draw a curtain to hide them, yet they will in one occasion or another become public. Robbing orchards and gardens in the season of fruit is the most prevalent, and other indulgence of fleshly appetites frequently cause repentance. The amusements commonly in vogue are ball, chess, quoits, and dancing. The people by frequently stirring up are attentive to their civil privileges and religious institutions. In liberality the people are not deficient, and have always furnished their quota for the public service. We have a small library of about 150 vols. established about 5 years since, and annually augmented.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

### RIDGEFIELD IN 1855.

THE following letter is from the racy pen of S. G. Goodrich, Esq., more familiarly known as Peter Parley, and was written to his brother in the year 1855, while on a visit to Ridgefield, after a long absence. It is published in his "Recollections of a Lifetime," but that book is owned by few, and is at present out of print. The letter is in Mr. Goodrich's best style, and will always be of interest to every one at all familiar with the town, as affording a true and life-like picture of faces and scenes now growing dim in the deepening shade of years.

It was addressed to this brother, who was expecting to visit the town with him, and had set out on the journey, but had been taken ill and forced to return. Mr. Goodrich it must be remembered was the son of Rev. Samuel Goodrich, extracts from whose unpublished History of Ridgefield in 1800, we have given in the previous chapter.

NEW YORK, August 20, 1855.

DEAR BROTHER : I greatly regret that you could not continue your journey with us to Ridgefield. The weather was fine, and the season—crowning the earth with abundance—made every landscape beautiful. The woods which, as you know, abound along the route, spread their intense shade over the land, thus mitigating the heat of the unclouded sun ; and the frequent



fields of Indian corn, with their long leaves and silken tassels, all fluttering in the breeze, gave a sort of holiday look to the scene. Of all agricultural crops this is the most picturesque and the most imposing. Let others magniloquize upon the vineyards of France and the olive orchards of Italy ; I parted with these scenes a few weeks since, and do not hesitate to say, that, as a spectacle to the eye, our maize fields are infinitely superior. Leaving New Haven by rail, we reached Norwalk in forty minutes ; an hour after we were at Ridgefield—having journeyed three miles by stage, from the Danbury and Norwalk station. Thus we performed a journey, in less than two hours, which cost a day's travel in our boyhood. You can well comprehend that we had a good time of it.

As I approached the town, I began to recognize localities—roads, houses, and hills. I was in a glow of excitement, for it was nineteen years since I had visited the place, and there was a mixture of the strange and familiar all around, which was at once pleasing and painful ; pleasing, because it revived many cherished memories, and painful, because it suggested that time is a tomb, into which man and his works are ever plunging, like a stream flowing on, only to disappear in an unfathomable gulf. The bright village of to-day is in fact the graveyard of the past generation. I was here, like one risen from the dead, and come to look on the place which I once knew, but which I shall soon know no more. All seemed to me a kind of dream—half real and half imaginary—now presenting some familiar and cherished remembrance, and now mocking me with strange and baffling revelations.

Nevertheless, all things considered, I enjoyed the scene. The physiognomy of the town—a swelling mound of hills, rising in a crescent of mountains—was all as I had learned it by heart in childhood. To the north, the bending line of Aspen Ledge ; to the east, the Redding Hills ; to the west, the Highlands

of the Hudson; to the south, the sea of forest-crowned undulations, sloping down to Long Island Sound—all in a cool but brilliant August sun, and all tinted with intense verdure, presented a scene to me—the pilgrim returning to his birth-place—of unrivalled interest.

In general the whole country seemed embowered in trees—fresh and exuberant, and strongly in contrast with the worn-out lands of the old countries—with openings here and there upon hillside and valley, consisting of green meadow, or pasture, or blooming maize, or perhaps patches of yellow stubble, for the smaller grains had been already harvested. As I came within the precincts of the village, I could not but admire the fields, as well on account of their evident richness of soil and excellent cultivation, as their general neatness. The town, you know, was originally blessed or cursed, as the case may be, by a most abundant crop of stones. To clear the land of these was the Herculean task of the early settlers. For many generations, they usurped the soil, obstructed the plough, dulled the scythe, and now, after ages of labor, they are formed into sturdy walls, neatly laid, giving to the entire landscape an aspect not only of comfort, but refinement. In our day these were rudely piled up with frequent breaches—the tempting openings for vagrant sheep, and loose, yearling cattle. No better evidence can be afforded of a general process and improvement, than that most of these have been relaid with something of the art and nicety of mason-work. The Mat Olmsteads and Azor Smiths of the past half century, who laid stone wall for Granther Baldwin and General King at a dollar a rod would be amazed to see that the succeeding generation has thrown their works aside in disgust and replaced them by constructions having somewhat of the solidity and exactitude of fortifications.

As we passed along, I observed that nearly all the houses which existed when we were boys, had given

place to new, and for the most part larger, structures. Here and there was an original dwelling. A general change had passed over the land : swamps had been converted into meadows ; streams that sprawled across the path, now flowed tidily beneath stone bridges ; little shallow ponds—the haunts of muddling geese—had disappeared ; the undergrowth of woods and copses had been cleared away ; briers and brambles, once thick with fruit, or abounding in birds'-nests, or perchance the hiding-place of snakes, had been extirpated, and corn and potatoes flourished in their stead. In one place, where I recollected to have unearthed a woodchuck, I saw a garden, and among its redolent pumpkins, cucumbers, and cabbages, was a row of tomatoes—a plant which in my early days was only known as a strange exotic, producing little red balls, which bore the enticing name of love-apples !

At last we came into the main street. This is the same—yet not the same. All the distances seemed less than as I had marked them in my memory. From the meeting-house to 'Squire Keeler's—which I thought to be a quarter of a mile—it is but thirty rods. At the same time the undulations seemed more frequent and abrupt. The old houses are mostly gone, and more sumptuous ones are in their place. A certain neatness and elegance have succeeded to the plain and primitive characteristics of other days.

The street, on the whole, is one of the most beautiful I know of. It is more than a mile in length and a hundred and twenty feet in width, ornamented with two continuous lines of trees—elms, sycamores, and sugar-maples—save only here and there a brief interval. Some of these, in front of the more imposing houses, are truly majestic. The entire street is carpeted with a green sod, soft as velvet to the feet. The high-road runs in the middle, with a footwalk on either side. These passages are not paved, but are covered with gravel, and so neatly cut, that they appear like pleasure-grounds. All is so bright and so

tasteful that you might expect to see some imperative sign-board, warning you, on peril of the law, not to tread upon the grass. Yet, as I learned, all this embellishment flows spontaneously from the choice of the people, and not from police regulations.

The general aspect of the street, however, let me observe, is not sumptuous, like Hartford and New Haven, or even Fairfield. There is still a certain quaintness and primness about the place. Here and there you see old respectable houses, showing the dim vestiges of ancient paint, while the contiguous gardens, groaning with rich fruits and vegetables, and the stately rows of elms in front, declare it to be taste, and not necessity, that thus cherishes the reverend hue of unsophisticated clapboards, and the venerable rust with which time baptizes unprotected shingles. There is a stillness about the town which lends favor to this characteristic of studied rusticity. There is no fast driving, no shouting, no railroad whistle—for you must remember that the station of the Danbury and Norwalk line is three miles off. Few people are to be seen in the streets, and those who do appear move with an air of leisure and tranquillity. It would seem dull and almost melancholy were it not that all around is so thrifty, so tidy, so really comfortable. Houses—white or brown—with green window-blinds, and embowered in lilacs and fruit-trees, and seen beneath the arches of wide-spreading American elms—the finest of the whole elm family—can never be otherwise than cheerful.

I went of course to the old Keeler tavern, for lodgings. The sign was gone, and though the house retained its ancient form, it was so neatly painted, and all around had such a look of repose, that I feared it had ceased from its ancient hospitalities. I, however, went to the door and rapped : it was locked ! A bad sign, thought I. Ere long, however, a respectable dame appeared, turned the key, and let me in. It was Anne Keeler converted into Mrs. Ressequie.



Had it been her mother, I should only have said that she had grown a little taller and more dignified ; as it was, the idea crossed my mind—

“ Fanny was younger once than she is now ! ”

But it seemed to me that her matronly graces fully compensated for all she might have lost of earlier pretensions. She looked at me gazingly, as if she half knew me. She was about inquiring my name, when I suggested that she might call me Smith, and begged her to tell me if she could give me lodgings. She replied that they did sometimes receive strangers, though they did not keep a tavern. I afterward heard that the family was rich, and that it was courtesy more than cash, which induced them to keep up the old habit of the place. I was kindly received, though at first as a stranger. After a short time I was found out, and welcomed as a friend. What fragrant butter, what white bread, what delicious succotash they gave me ! And as to the milk—it was just such as cows gave fifty years ago, and upon the slightest encouragement positively produced an envelope of golden cream ! Alas ! how cows have degenerated—especially in the great cities of the earth—in New York, London, or Paris—it is all the same. He who wishes to eat with a relish that the Astor House or Morley’s or the Grand Hotel du Louvre cannot give, should go to Ridgefield, and put himself under the care of Mrs. Ressequie. If he be served, as I was, by her daughter—a thing, however, that I cannot promise—he may enjoy a lively and pleasant conversation while he discusses his meal. When you go there—as go you must—do not forget to order ham and eggs, for they are such as we ate in our childhood—not a mass of red leather steeped in grease, and covered with a tough, bluish gum—as is now the fashion in these things. As to blackberry and huckleberry pies, and similar good gifts, you will find them just such as our mother made fifty years ago, when these bounties of



Providence were included in the prayer—"Give us this day our daily bread," and were a worthy answer to such a petition.

Immediately after my arrival, waiting only to deposit my carpet-bag in my room, I set out to visit our house—our former home. As I came near I saw that the footpath we had worn across Deacon Benedict's lot to shorten the distance from the street, had given place to a highway. I entered this, and was approaching the object of my visit, when I was overtaken by a young man, walking with a long stride.

"Whose house is this on the hill?" said I.

"It is mine," was the reply.

"Indeed; you must have a fine view from your upper windows?"

"Yes, the view is famous, and the house itself is somewhat noted. It was built by Peter Parley, and here he lived many years!"

By this time we had reached the place. The stranger, after I had looked at the premises a few moments said, "Perhaps you would like to ascend the hill to the north, from which the view is very extensive?" I gave assent, and we went thither—soon finding ourselves in the old Keeler lot, on the top of High Ridge, so familiar to our youthful rambles. With all the vividness of my early recollections, I really had no adequate idea of the beauty of the scene, as now presented to us. The circle of view was indeed less than I had imagined, for I once thought it immense; but the objects were more striking, more vividly tinted, more picturesquely disposed. Long Island Sound, which extends for sixty miles before the eye, except as it is hidden here and there by intercepting hills and trees, seems nearer than it did to the inexperienced vision of my childhood. I could distinguish the different kinds of vessels on the water, and the island itself—stretched out in a long blue line beyond—presented its cloud-like tissues of forest, alternating with patches of yellow



PETER PARLEY HOUSE.—RESIDENCE OF WM. O. SEYMOUR, Esq.





sandbanks along the shore. I could distinctly indicate the site of Norwalk ; and the spires peering through the mass of trees to the eastward, spoke suggestive of the beautiful towns and villages that line the northern banks of the Sound.

West Mountain seemed nearer and less imposing than I had imagined, but the sea of mountains beyond, terminating in the Highlands of the Hudson, more than fulfilled my remembrances. The scene has no abrupt and startling grandeur from this point of view, but in that kind of beauty which consists in blending the peace and quietude of cultivated valleys with the sublimity of mountains—all in the enchantment of distance, and all mantled with the vivid hues of summer—it equals the fairest scenes in Italy. The deep blue velvet which is thrown over our northern landscapes, differs indeed from the reddish purple of the Apennines, but it is in all things as poetic, as stimulating to the imagination, as available to the painter, as suggestive to the poet—to all, indeed, who feel and appreciate the truly beautiful. As I gazed upon this lovely scene, how did the memories of early days come back, clothed in the romance of childhood ! I had then no idea of distance beyond these mountains ; no conception of landscape beauty, no idea of picturesque sublimity—that surpassed what was familiar to me here. Indeed, all my first measures of grandeur and beauty, in nature, were formed upon these glorious models, now before me. How often have I stood upon this mound, at the approach of sunset, and gazed in speechless wonder upon yonder mountains, glowing as they were in the flood of sapphire which was then poured upon them ! I pray you to excuse my constant reference to foreign lands ; but as I have just left them, it is natural to make comparisons with these objects, familiar to my childhood. Let me say, then, that no sunsets surpass our own in splendor, nor have I seen any thing to equal them in brilliancy, when the retiring orb of day, as if to shed

glory upon his departure, pours his rays upon the outstretched fleece of clouds, and these reflect their blaze upon the mountain landscape, below. Then, for a brief space, as you know, the heavens seem a canopy of burnished gold, and the earth beneath a kingdom robed in purple velvet, and crowned with rubies and sapphires. In Italy, the sunset sky has its enchantments, but while these perhaps surpass the same exhibitions of nature in our climate, in respect to a certain tranquil softness and exquisite blending of rainbow hues, they are still inferior, in gorgeous splendor, to the scenes which I have been describing.

Having taken a hasty but earnest view of the grand panorama of High Ridge, I returned with my guide to the house. I feigned thirst, and begged a glass of water. This was readily given, and I tasted once more the nectar of our "old oaken bucket." After glancing around, and making a few observations, I thanked my attendant for his courtesy—who, by the way, had no suspicion that I knew the place as well as himself—and took my leave, and returned to the hotel. My emotions upon thus visiting our early home—so full of the liveliest associations—it would be utterly in vain to attempt to describe.

It was now Saturday evening, which I spent quietly with my host and his family, in talking over old times. In the morning I rose early, for it seemed a sin to waste such hours as these. Standing on the northern stoop of the Keeler tavern, I looked upon the beautiful landscape bounded by the Redding and Danbury hills, and saw the glorious march of morning over the scene. The weather was clear, and the serenity of the Sabbath was in the breadth of nature : even the breezy morn soon subsided into stillness, as if the voice of God hallowed it. The birds seemed to know that He rested on this seventh day. As the sun came up, the fluttering leaves sank into repose : no voice of lowing herd or baying hound broke over the hills. All was silent and motionless in the



street : every thing seemed to feel that solemn command—Remember the Sabbath-day !—save only a strapping Shanghai cock in Mr. Lewis's yard over the way, which strutted, crowed, and chased the hens—like a very Mormon—evidently caring for none of these things.

At nine o'clock the first bell rang. The first stroke told me that it was not the same to which my childish ear was accustomed. Upon inquiry, I learned that on a certain Fourth of July, some ten years back, it was rung so merrily as to be cracked ! Had any one asked me who was likely to have done this, I should have said J . . . . H . . . . ., and he indeed it was. With a good-will, however, quite characteristic of him, he caused it to be replaced by a new one, and though its tone is deeper, and even more melodious than the old one, I felt disappointed, and a shade of sadness came over my mind.

On going into the meeting-house, I found it to be totally changed. The pulpit, instead of being at the west, was at the north, and the galleries had been transposed to suit this new arrangement. The Puritan pine color of the pews had given way to white paint. The good old oaken floor was covered by Kidderminster carpets. The choir, instead of being distributed into four parts, and placed on different sides of the gallery, was all packed together in a heap. Instead of Deacon Hawley for chorister, there was a young man who "knew not Joseph," and in lieu of a pitch-pipe to give the key, there was a melodeon to lead the choir. Instead of Mear, Old Hundred, Aylesbury, Montgomery, or New Durham—songs full of piety and pathos, and in which the whole congregation simultaneously joined—they sang modern tunes, whose name and measure I did not know. The performance was artistic and skillful, but it seemed to lack the unction of a hearty echo from the bosom of the assembly, as was the saintly custom among the fathers.

The congregation was no less changed than the place itself, for remember, I had not been in this building for five and forty years. The patriarchs of my boyhood—Deacon Olmstead, Deacon Benedict, Deacon Hawley, Granther Baldwin, 'Squire Keeler, Nathan Smith—were not there, nor were their types in their places. A few gray-haired men I saw, having dim and fleeting semblances to these Anakins of my youthful imagination, but who they were, I could not tell. I afterward heard that most of them were the companions of my early days, now grown to manhood and bearing the impress of their parentage—blent with vestiges of their youth—thus at once inciting and baffling my curiosity. For the most part, however, the assembly was composed of a new generation. In several instances I felt a strange sort of embarrassment as to whether the person I saw was the boy grown up or the papa grown down. It produces a very odd confusion of ideas to realize in an old man before you, the playmate of your childhood, whom you had forgotten for forty years, but who in that time has been trudging along in life, at the same pace as yourself. At first, every thing looked belittled, degenerated in dimensions. The house seemed small, the galleries low, the pulpit mean. The people appeared Lilliputian. These impressions soon passed off, and I began to recognize a few persons around me. William Hawley is just as you would have expected; his hair white as snow; his countenance mild, refined, cheerful, though marked with threescore and ten. Irad Hawley, though he has his residence in "Fifth Avenue," spends his summers here, and begins now to look like his father the deacon. I thought I discovered Gen. King in an erect and martial form in one of the pews, but it proved to be his son Joshua—who now occupies the family mansion, and worthily stands at the head of the house. As I came out of church, I was greeted with many hearty shakes of the hand, but in most cases I could

with difficulty remember those who thus claimed recognition.

The discourse was very clever, and thoroughly orthodox, as it should be, for I found that the Confession and Covenant of 1750 were still in force, just as our father left them. Even the eleventh article stands as it was—"You believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a day of judgment, in which God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ; when the righteous shall be acquitted and received to eternal life, and the wicked shall be sentenced to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

I was, I confess, not a little shocked to hear the account the minister gave of the church members, for he declared that they were full of evil thoughts—envy, jealousy, revenge, and all uncharitableness. He said he knew all about it, and could testify that they were a great deal worse than the world in general believed, or conceived them to be. Indeed, he affirmed that it took a real experimental Christian to understand how totally depraved they were. I was consoled at finding that this was not the settled minister—Mr. Clark—but a missionary, accustomed to preach in certain lost places in that awful Babylon called New York. Perhaps the sermon was adapted to the people it was designed for, but it seemed ill suited to the latitude and longitude of such a quaint, primitive parish as Ridgefield, which is without an oyster-cellar, a livery stable, a grog-shop, a lawyer, a broker, a drunkard, or a profane swearer.

This circumstance reminded me of an itinerant Bonerges, who, in his migrations, half a century ago, through western New York, was requested to prepare a sermon to be preached at the execution of an Indian, who had been convicted of murder, and was speedily to be hung. This he complied with, but the convict escaped, and the ceremony did not take place. The preacher, however, not liking to have so good a

thing lost, delivered it the next Sabbath to a pious congregation in the Western Reserve, where he chanced to be—stating that it was composed for a hanging, but as that did not take place, he would preach it now, presuming that it would be found appropriate to the occasion !

In the afternoon we had a begging sermon from a young converted Jew, who undertook to prove that his tribe was the most interesting in the world, and their conversion the first step toward the millennium. After the sermon they took up a contribution to aid him in getting an education ; he also sold a little story-book of his conversion at twelve and a half cents a copy, for the benefit of his converted sister. I have no objection to Jews, converted or unconverted, but I must say that my reverence for the house of God is such that I do not like to hear there the chink of copper, which generally prevails in a contribution-box. Even that of silver and gold has no melody for me, in such a place. It always reminds me painfully of those vulgar pigeon-dealers who were so summarily and so properly scourged out of the Temple.

The old dilapidated Episcopal church, which you remember on the main street—a church not only without a bishop, but without a congregation—has given place to a new edifice and stated services, with a large and respectable body of worshippers. The Methodists, who were wont to assemble, fifty years ago, in Dr. Baker's kitchen, have put up a new house, white and bright, and crowded every Sabbath with attentive listeners. This church numbers two hundred members, and is the largest in the place. Though, in its origin, it seemed to thrive upon the outcasts of society—its people are now as respectable as those of any other religious society in the town. No longer do they choose to worship in barns, school-houses, and by-places ; no longer do they affect leanness, long faces, and loose, uncombed hair ; no longer do they cherish bad grammar, low idioms,



and the euphony of a nasal twang, in preaching. Their place of worship is in good taste and good keeping : their dress is comely, and in the fashion of the day. The preacher is a man of education, refinement, and dignity, and he and the Rev. Mr. Clark—our father's successor—exchange pulpits, and call each other brother ! Has not the good time come ?

On Monday morning I took a wide range over the town with Joshua King, who, by the way, is not only the successor, but in some things the repetition of his father. He represents him in person—as I have already intimated—and has many of his qualities. He has remodelled the grounds around the old family mansion, amplifying, and embellishing them with much judgment. The house itself is unchanged, except by paint and the introduction of certain articles of furniture and tasteful decorations—testimonials of the proprietor's repeated visits to Europe. Here, being a bachelor, he has gathered some of his nieces, and here he receives the members of the King dynasty down to the third generation—all seeming to regard it as the Jerusalem of the family. The summer gathering is delightful, bringing hither the refinements of the best society of New York, Philadelphia, and other places. Here I spent some pleasant hours, meeting, of course, many of the neighbors, who came to see me with almost as much curiosity as if I had been the veritable Joyce Heth.

In all parts of the town I was struck with the evidences of change—gentle, gradual, it is true—but still bespeaking the lapse of half a century. Along the main street, the general outline of things is the same, but, in detail, all is transformed, or at least modified. Most of the old houses have disappeared, or have undergone such mutations as hardly to be recognized. New and more expensive edifices are scattered here and there. If you ask who are the proprietors, you will be told—Dr. Perry, Joshua King, Nathan Smith—but they are not those whom we



knew by these names—they are their sons, perhaps their grandsons. Master Stebbins's school-house is swept away, and even the pond across the road—the scene of many a school-day frolic—is evaporated ! I am constantly struck with the general desiccation which has passed over the place ; many of the brooks, which formed our winter skating and sliding places, have vanished. I looked in vain for the pool back of Deacon John Benedict's house—which I always imagined to be the scene of the ballad :

“ What shall we have for dinner, Mrs. Bond ?  
There is beef in the larder and ducks in the pond :  
Dill, dill, dill, dill, dilled,  
Come here and be killed ! ”

Col. Bradley's house, that seemed once so awful and so exclusive, is now a dim, rickety, and tenantless edifice, for sale, with all its appurtenances, for twenty-five hundred dollars ! Is it not strange to see this once proud tenement, the subject of blight and decay, and that too in the midst of general prosperity ? Nor is this all : it has just been the subject of a degrading hoax. I must tell you the story, for it will show you that the march of progress has invaded even Ridgefield.

About three days since there appeared in the village a man claiming to be the son-in-law of George Law. In a mysterious manner he agreed to buy the Bradley estate. With equal mystery he contracted to purchase several other houses in the vicinity. It then leaked out that a grand speculation was on foot : there was to be a railroad through Ridgefield ; the town was to be turned into a city, and a hotel, resembling the Astor House, was to take the place of the old dilapidated shell now upon the Bradley premises ! An electric feeling soon ran through the village ; speculation began to swell in the bosom of society. Under this impulse rocks rose, rivers doubled, hills mounted, valleys oscillated. This sober town

—anchored in everlasting granite, having defied the shock of ages—now trembled in the hysterical balance of trade.

Two days passed, and the bubble burst ; the puff-ball was punctured ; the sham son-in-law of George Law was discovered to be a lawless son of a pauper of Danbury. All his operations were in fact a hoax. At twelve o'clock on Saturday night he was seized, and taken from his bed by an independent corps under Capt. Lynch. They tied him fast to a buttonwood-tree in the main street, called the Liberty Pole.

“ No man e'er felt the halter draw  
In good opinion of the law ! ”

At all events, the prisoner deemed it a great incongruity to use an institution consecrated to the rights of man and the cause of freedom, for the purpose of depriving him of the power to seek happiness in his own way ; so about ten o'clock on Sunday morning—finding it unpleasant to be in this situation while the people went by, shaking their heads, on their way to church—he managed to get out his penknife, cut his cords, and make a bee-line for South Salem.

Farther on, proceeding northward, I found that Dr. Baker's old house—its kitchen the cradle of Ridgefield Methodism—had departed, and two or three modern edifices were near its site. Master Stebbins's house—from its elevated position at the head of the street, seeming like the guardian genius of the place—still stands, venerable alike from its dun complexion, its antique form, and its historical remembrances. Its days may be set at a hundred years, and hence it is an antiquity in our brief chronology. It almost saw the birth of Ridgefield ; it has probably looked down upon the building of every other edifice in the street. It presided over the fight of 1777. Close by, Arnold's horse was shot under him, and he, according to tradition, made a flying leap over a six-barred gate and escaped. Near its threshold

the British cannon was planted, which sent a ball into the north-eastern corner-post of 'Squire Keeler's tavern, and which, covered up by a sliding shingle, as a relic too precious for the open air, is still to be seen there.

The old house I found embowered in trees—some, primeval elms, spreading their wide branches protectingly over the roof, stoop, and foreground; others — sugar maples, upright, symmetrical, and deeply verdant, as is the wont of these beautiful children of our American forest. Other trees—apples, pears, peaches, and plums, bending with fruit—occupied the orchard grounds back of the house. The garden at the left seemed a jubilee of tomatoes, beets, squashes, onions, cucumbers, beans, and pumpkins. A vine of the latter had invaded a peach-tree, and a huge oval pumpkin, deeply ribbed, and now emerging from its bronze hue into a golden yellow, swung aloft as if to proclaim the victory. By the porch was a thick clambering grapevine, presenting its purple bunches almost to your mouth, as you enter the door. I knocked, and Anne Stebbins, my former school-mate, let me in. She was still a maiden, in strange contrast to the prolific and progressive state of all around. She did not know me, but when I told her how I once saw her climb through the opening in the school-house wall, overhead, and suggested the blue-mixed hue of her stockings—she rallied, and gave me a hearty welcome.

You will no doubt, in some degree, comprehend the feelings with which I rambled over these scenes of our boyhood, and you will forgive, if you cannot approve, the length of this random epistle. I will trespass but little further upon your patience. I must repeat, that the general aspect of the town, in respect to its roads, churches, houses, lands—all show a general progress in wealth, taste, and refinement. Nor is this advance in civilization merely external. William Hawley—a most competent judge, as he has been the









leading merchant of the place for forty years—mentioned some striking evidences of this. At the beginning of this century, most of the farmers were in debt, and a large part of their lands were under mortgage: now not four farms in the place are thus encumbered. Then it was the custom for the men to spend a good deal of their time, and especially in winter, at the stores and taverns, in tippling and small gambling. This practice has ceased. Drunkenness, profane swearing, Sabbath-breaking, noisy night rows, which were common, are now almost wholly known. There are but two town paupers, and these are not indigenuous. Education is better, higher in its standard, and is nearly universal. Ideas of comfort in the modes of life are more elevated, the houses are improved, the furniture is more convenient and more abundant. That religion has not lost its hold on the conscience, is evident from the fact that three flourishing churches exist; that the duties of patriotism are not forgotten, is evinced by a universal attendance at the polls on election days; at the same time it is clear that religious and political discussions have lost their acerbity—thus leaving the feeling of good neighborhood more general, and the tone of humanity in all things more exalted.

Is there not encouragement, hope, in these things—for Ridgefield is not alone in this forward march of society? It is in the general tide of prosperity—economical, social, and moral—but an example of what has been going on all over New England—perhaps over the whole country. We hear a great deal of the iniquities in the larger cities; but society even there, is not worse than formerly: these places—their houses, streets, prisons, brothels—are exhausted, as by an air-pump, of all their doings, good and bad, and the seething mass of details is doled out day after day, by the penny press, to appease the hunger and thirst of society for excitement. Thus, what was once hidden is now thrown open, and seems multi-

plied and magnified by a dozen powerful lenses—each making the most of it, and seeking to outdo all others in dressing up the show for the public taste. If you will make the comparison, you will see that, now, tipping over an omnibus, or the foundering of a ferry-boat, takes up more space in a newspaper than did six murders or a dozen conflagrations fifty years ago. Then the world's doings could be dispatched in a weekly folio of four pages, with pica type; now they require forty pages of brevier, every day. Our population is increased—doubled, quadrupled, if you please—but the newspaper press has enlarged its functions a thousandfold. It costs more paper and print to determine whether a policeman of New York was born in England or the United States, than are usually consumed in telling the story of the Revolutionary war. This institution—the Press—has, in fact, become a microscope and a mirror—seeing all, magnifying all, reflecting all—until at last it requires a steady brain to discover in its shifting and passing panoramas the sober, simple truth. So far as the subject of which I am writing is concerned, I am satisfied that if our cities seem more corrupt than formerly, it is only in appearance and not in reality. If we hear more about the vices of society, it is because, in the first place, things are more exposed to the public view, and in the next place, the moral standards are higher, and hence these evils are made the subject of louder and more noticeable comment. These obvious suggestions will solve whatever difficulty there may be in adopting my conclusions.

But however the fact may be as to our larger cities, it cannot be doubted that all over New England, at least, there has been a quite, but earnest and steady march of civilization—especially within the last forty years. The war of 1812 was disastrous to our part of the country; disastrous, I firmly believe, to our whole country. In New England it checked the natural progress of society, it impoverished the peo-

ple, it debased their manners, it corrupted their hearts. Let others vaunt the glory of war ; I shall venture to say what I have seen and known. We have now had forty years of peace, and the happy advances I have noticed—bringing increased light and comfort in at every door, rich or poor, to bless the inhabitants—are its legitimate fruits. The inherent tendency of our New England society is to improvement : give us peace, giving us tranquillity, and with the blessing of God we shall continue to advance.

You will not suppose me to say that government can do nothing : the prosperity of which I speak is in a great measure imputable to the encouragement given, for a series of years, to our domestic industry. When farming absorbed society, a large part of the year was lost, or worse than lost ; because tavern haunting, tippling, and gambling were the chief resources of men in the dead and dreary winter months. Manufactures gave profitable occupation during this inclement period. Formerly the markets were remote, and we all know, from the records of universal history, that farmers without the stimulus of ready markets, sink into indolence and indifference. The protection, the encouragement, the stimulating of any of our manufacturing and mechanical industry, created home markets in every valley, along every stream—thus rousing the taste, energy, and ambition of the farmers within reach of these pervading influences. Ridgefield is not, strictly speaking, a manufacturing town ; but the beneficent operation of the multiplying and diversifying of the occupations of society, has reached this, as it has every other town and village in the State, actually transforming the condition of the people, by increasing their wealth, multiplying their comforts, enlarging their minds, elevating their sentiments : in short, increasing their happiness.

The importance of the fact I state—the progress and improvement of the country towns—is plain,

when we consider that here, and not in the great cities—New York, or Boston, or Philadelphia—are the hope, strength, and glory of our nation. Here, in the smaller towns and villages, are indeed the majority of the people, and here there is a weight of sober thought, just judgment, and virtuous feeling, that will serve as rudder and ballast to our country, whatever weather may betide.

As I have so recently travelled through some of the finest and most renowned portions of the European continent, I find myself constantly comparing the towns and villages which I see here with these foreign lands. One thing is clear, that there are in continental Europe no such country towns and villages as those of New England and some other portions of this country. Not only the exterior but the interior is totally different. The villages there resemble the squalid suburbs of a city: the people are like their houses—poor and subservient—narrow in intellect, feeling, and habits of thought. I know twenty towns in France—having from two to ten thousand inhabitants, where, if you except the prefects, mayors, notaries, and a few other persons in each place—there is scarcely a family that rises to the least independence of thought, or even a moderate elevation of character. All the power, all the thought, all the genius, all the expanse of intellect, are centred at Paris. The blood of the country is drawn to this seat and centre, leaving the limbs and members cold and pulseless as those of a corpse.

How different is it in this country: the life, vigor, power of these United States are diffused through a thousand veins and arteries over the whole people, every limb nourished, every member invigorated! New York, Philadelphia, and Boston do not give law to this country; that comes from the people, the majority of whom resemble those I have described at Ridgefield—farmers, mechanics, manufacturers, merchants—independent in their circumstances, and



sober, religious, virtuous in their habits of thought and conduct. I make allowance for the sinister influence of vice, which abounds in some places ; for the debasing effects of demagogism in our politicians ; for the corruption of selfish and degrading interests, cast into the general current of public feeling and opinion. I admit that these sometimes make the nation swerve, for a time, from the path of wisdom, but the wandering is neither wide nor long. The preponderating national mind is just and sound, and if danger comes, it will manifest its power and avert it.

But I must close this long letter, and with it bid adieu to my birthplace. Farewell to Ridgefield ! Its soil is indeed stubborn, its climate severe, its creed rigid ; yet where is the landscape more smiling, the sky more glorious, the earth more cheering ? Where is society more kindly, neighborhood more equal, life more tranquil ? Where is the sentiment of humanity higher, life more blest ? Where else can you find two thousand country people, with the refinements of the city—their farms unmortgaged, their speech unblemished with oaths, their breath uncontaminated with alcohol, their poor-house without a single native pauper ?

Daniel Webster once said, jocosely, that New Hampshire is a good place to come from : it seems to me, in all sincerity, that Ridgefield is a good place to go to. Should I ever return there to end my days, this may be my epitaph :

My faults forgotten, and my sins forgiven—

Let this, my tranquil birthplace, be my grave :

As in my youth I deem'd it nearest heaven—

So here I give to God the breath he gave !

Yours ever,

S. G. G.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### TRADITION AND REMINISCENCE.

THREE-QUARTERS of a century ago there was sometimes to be seen in the village a strange-appearing old woman, familiarly known as Sarah Bishop. Her whole appearance was to the last degree peculiar. Poorly clad, her form slightly bent, her face pale and careworn, her brow wrinkled and nearly hidden by long locks of gray hair, which were allowed to fall carelessly over it, her step quick and agile, she would seem to glide rather than walk through the town street in quest of such articles of food as were absolutely indispensable to the sustenance of the body ; or a few crumbs of that spiritual bread which is no less indispensable to the life of the soul. She is said to have reminded one more of a visitant from the spirit-world than of a being of actual flesh and blood.

Her home—if *home* it could be called—was situated on one of the south-eastern declivities of West Mountain, about four miles north-west from the village of Ridgefield, and just inside the town limits of Salem. It was formed in part by a mass of projecting rock, and in part by pieces of bark and limbs of trees thrown up by her own hands for a covering.

No name could better apply to her manner of life than *hermitess*. She was no mere amateur recluse—she was actually shut off from all society. Her

dwelling-place was one difficult to find, and her reticence covered alike all the incidents of her past life and her present thought. She repelled almost with sternness, rather than courted, the sympathy even of those of her own sex. She loved solitude, she did not feign a preference for it.

The tradition concerning this singular woman is that during the Revolutionary war she lived with her parents on Long Island ; but her father's house having been at that time burned, and she greatly wronged by a British officer, she left her home, and wandered about until she discovered this lonely spot and the half-formed cave, from which she could not only overlook the Sound, but which on a clear day enabled her to feast her eyes upon the very hills and valleys which surrounded the home of her childhood.

A Poughkeepsie paper published in 1804 gives the following account of a visit to this cave and its occupant :

“ Yesterday I went in the company of two Capt. Smiths of this town (N. Y.) to the mountain, to visit the hermitage. As you pass the southern and elevated ridge of the mountain, and begin to descend the southern steep, you meet with a perpendicular descent of a rock, in the front of which is this cave. At the foot of this rock is a gentle descent of rich and fertile ground, extending about ten rods, when it instantly forms a frightful precipice, descending half a mile to the pond called Long Pond. In the front of the rock, on the north, where the cave is, and level with the ground, there appears a large frustum of the rock, of a double fathom in size, thrown out by some unknown convulsion of nature, and lying in the front of the cavity from which it was rent, partly enclosing the mouth, and forming a room :

the rock is left entire above, and forms the roof of this humble mansion. This cavity is the habitation of the hermitess, in which she has passed the best of her years, excluded from all society ; she keeps no domestic animal, not even fowl, cat, or dog. Her little plantation, consisting of half an acre, is cleared of its wood, and reduced to grass, where she has raised a few peach-trees, and yearly plants a few hills of beans, cucumbers, and potatoes ; the whole is surrounded with a luxuriant grape-vine, which over-spreads the surrounding wood and is very productive. On the opposite side of this little tenement is a fine fountain of excellent water ; at this fountain we found the wonderful woman, whose appearance it is a little difficult to describe : indeed, like nature in its first state, she was without form. Her dress appeared little else than one confused and shapeless mass of rags, patched together without any order, which obscured all human shape, excepting her head, which was clothed with a luxuriance of lank gray hair depending on every side as time had formed it, without any covering or ornament. When she discovered our approach she exhibited the appearance of a wild and timid animal, she started and hastened to her cave, which she entered, and barricadoed the entrance with old shells, pulled from the decayed trees. We approached this humble habitation, and after some conversation with its inmate, obtained liberty to remove the pallisadoes and look in ; for we were not able to enter, the room being only sufficient to accommodate one person. We saw no utensil either for labor or cookery, save an old pewter basin and a gourd shell ; no bed but the solid rock, unless it were a few old rags scattered here and there ; no bed-clothes of any kind, not the least appearance of food or fire. She had, indeed, a place in one corner of her cell, where a fire had at some time been kindled, but it did not appear there had been one for some months. To confirm this, a gentleman says he

passed her cell five or six days after the great fall of snow in the beginning of March, that she had no fire then, and had not been out of her cave since the snow had fallen. How she subsists during the severe season is yet a mystery ; she says she eats but little flesh of any kind ; in the summer she lives on berries, nuts, and roots. We conversed with her for some time, found her to be of a sound mind, a religious turn of thought, and entirely happy in her situation ; of this she has given repeated proofs by refusing to quit this dreary abode. She keeps a Bible with her, and says she takes much satisfaction and spent much time in reading it."

The first piece of poetry ever published by S. G. Goodrich (Peter Parley) had this hermitess for its subject. It ran as follows :

For many a year the mountain hag  
Was a theme of village wonder,  
For she made her home in the dizzy crag,  
Where the eagle bore his plunder.  
Up the beetling cliff she was seen at night  
Like a ghost to glide away ;  
But she came again with the morning light,  
From the forest wild and gray.  
Her face was wrinkled, and passionless seem'd  
As her bosom, all blasted and dead—  
And her colorless eye like an icicle gleam'd,  
Yet no sorrow or sympathy shed.  
Her long snowy locks, as the winter drift,  
On the wind were backward cast ;  
And her shrivell'd form glided by so swift,  
You had said 'twere a ghost that pass'd.  
Her house was a cave in a giddy rock,  
That o'erhung a lonesome vale ;  
And 'twas deeply scarr'd by the lightning shock,  
And swept by the vengeful gale.

As alone on the cliff she musingly sate—  
The fox at her fingers would snap ;  
The crow would sit on her snow-white pate,  
And the rattlesnake coil in her lap.

The night-hawk look'd down with a welcome eye,  
As he stoop'd in his airy swing ;  
And the haughty eagle hover'd so nigh  
As to fan her long locks with his wing.

But when Winter roll'd dark his sullen wave  
From the west with gusty shock,  
Old Sarah, deserted, crept cold to her cave,  
And slept without bed in her rock.

No fire illumined her dismal den,  
Yet a tatter'd Bible she read ;  
For she saw in the dark with a wizard ken,  
And talk'd with the troubled<sup>7</sup> dead.

And often she mutter'd a foreign name,  
With curses too fearful to tell,  
And a tale of horror—of madness and shame—  
She told to the walls of her cell !

Mr. Goodrich further says of her ("Recollections of a Lifetime," vol i., p. 293) : "In my rambles among the mountains, I have seen her passing through the forest, or sitting silent as a statue upon the prostrate trunk of a tree, or perchance upon a stone or mound, scarcely to be distinguished from the inanimate objects—wood, earth, and rock—around her. She had a sense of propriety as to personal appearance, for when she visited the town, she was decently though poorly clad ; when alone in the wilderness she seemed little more than a squalid mass of rags. My excursions frequently brought me within the wild precincts of her solitary den. Several times I have paid a visit to the spot, and in two instances found her at home. A place



more desolate—in its general outline—more absolutely given up to the wildness of nature, it is impossible to conceive. Her cave was a hollow in the rock, about six feet square. Except a few rags and an old basin, it was without furniture—her bed being the floor of the cave, and her pillow a projecting point of the rock. It was entered by a natural door about three feet wide and four feet high, and was closed in severe weather only by pieces of bark. At a distance of a few feet was a cleft, where she kept a supply of roots and nuts, which she gathered, and the food that was given her. She was reputed to have a secret depository, where she kept a quantity of antique dresses, several of them of rich silks, and apparently suited to fashionable life : though I think this was an exaggeration. At a little distance down the ledge, there was a fine spring of water, in the vicinity of which she was often found in fair weather.

“There was no attempt, either in or around the spot, to bestow upon it an air of convenience or comfort. A small space of cleared ground was occupied by a few thriftless peach-trees, and in summer a patch of starvelling beans, cucumbers, and potatoes. Up two or three of the adjacent forest-trees there clambered luxuriant grape-vines, highly productive in their season. With the exception of these feeble marks of cultivation, all was left ghastly and savage as nature made it. The trees, standing upon the top of the cliff, and exposed to the shock of the tempest, were bent, and stooping toward the valley—their limbs contorted, and their roots clinging, as with an agonizing grasp, into the rifts of the rocks upon which they stood. Many of them were hoary with age, and hollow with decay ;

others were stripped of their leaves by the blasts, and others still, grooved and splintered by the lightning. The valley below, enriched with the decay of centuries, and fed with moisture from the surrounding hills, was a wild paradise of towering oaks, and other giants of the vegetable kingdom, with a rank undergrowth of tangled shrubs. In the distance, to the east, the gathered streams spread out into a beautiful expanse of water called Long Pond.

“ A place at once so secluded and so wild was, of course, the chosen haunt of birds, beasts, and reptiles. The eagle built her nest and reared her young in the clefts of the rocks ; foxes found shelter in the caverns, and serpents revelled alike in the dry hollows of the cliffs and the dank recesses of the valley. The hermitess had made companionship with these brute tenants of the wood. The birds had become so familiar with her, that they seemed to heed her almost as little as if she had been a stone. The fox fearlessly pursued his hunt and his gambols in her presence. The rattlesnake hushed his monitory signal as he approached her. Such things, at least, were entertained by the popular belief. It was said, indeed, that she had domesticated a particular rattlesnake, and that he paid her daily visits. She was accustomed—so said the legend—to bring him milk from the villages, which he devoured with great relish.

“ During the winter she was confined for several months to her cell. At that period she lived upon roots and nuts, which she had laid in for the season. She had no fire, and, deserted even by her brute companions, she was absolutely alone, save that she seemed to hold communion with the invisible world.

She appeared to have no sense of solitude, no weariness at the slow lapse of days and months : night had no darkness, the tempest no terror, winter no desolation, for her. When spring returned, she came down from her mountain, a mere shadow—each year her form more bent, her limbs more thin and wasted, her hair more blanched, her eye more colorless.”

In the year 1810 this strange life ended, and ended in a manner sadly in keeping with all which had preceded it.

One stormy night she left the house of a Mr. Wilson, living where Mr. Timothy Jones now lives, some two miles away, to return by a nearer route across the fields to her own wretched den. A few days after, much anxiety having been felt as to her condition, search was made for her. Not finding her in the cave, those in search started down across the fields towards the house at which she had been last seen. They had proceeded but a little way before they discovered her lifeless body literally wedged in between masses of rocks. She had never reached her home. The things which the kind neighbor had given her were with her. In attempting to climb the steep and rocky hill-side she had missed her footing and perished.

The neighbors and friends took up her body, and having prepared it for the grave, buried it in the old burying-ground connected with the Episcopal Church, North Salem. No stone marks the spot where her body rests, but the old cave, still to be seen in the mountain-side, will keep fresh and green her memory, while that of many who lived in affluence and died greatly lamented shall have perished.

During the war of 1812 Zina St. John, Major Boughton, Adniram Keeler, Josiah Dykeman, and several others were drafted into the government service and stationed at New London, Ct.

While there they were visited by an old lady from Ridgebury (widow of William Forrester, Esq.), familiarly called Aunt Sarah. She was partially deranged, and on this occasion had conceived the idea that our soldiers were starving at their posts. Unbeknown to her relatives, she donned her late husband's military coat and hat, obtained a young horse but recently bitted, and securing a cheese and a ham in a bag, placed it on the colt, and, without a saddle, rode to New London, a distance of over seventy miles. Upon her arrival there she at once rode into camp, where she found our boys, and treated them to the contents of the bag. The officers, comprehending her situation, treated her kindly, and on the following day returned her to her home.

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Mrs. Sarah Jewett, now in her ninety-second year, has in her possession a copper kettle, which is said to have been brought to this country in the Mayflower. In this kettle the first cup of tea was made in the town. There is a very amusing tradition concerning this first tea-making. It was in an old house, which stood immediately back of the residence of Mr. Howard King, then owned and occupied by Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll, that this first attempt at tea-drinking was made. The tea was placed in the kettle, and a sufficient quantity of water added ; when properly boiled, the water was thrown away and the tea-leaves were *eaten*.

The Indian sachem Katoonah, from whom the town tract was originally purchased, lies buried beside his favorite wife on the heights of Cantitoe (Katoonah's own land), where two immense boulders are shown as marking the spot. Cantitoe is in Bedford, Westchester County, N. Y., and the site of this chieftain's supposed grave is on the farm of Mr. Pillow. The original deeds of the town of Bedford show that much of that land, as well as of towns south, was purchased of Katoonah.



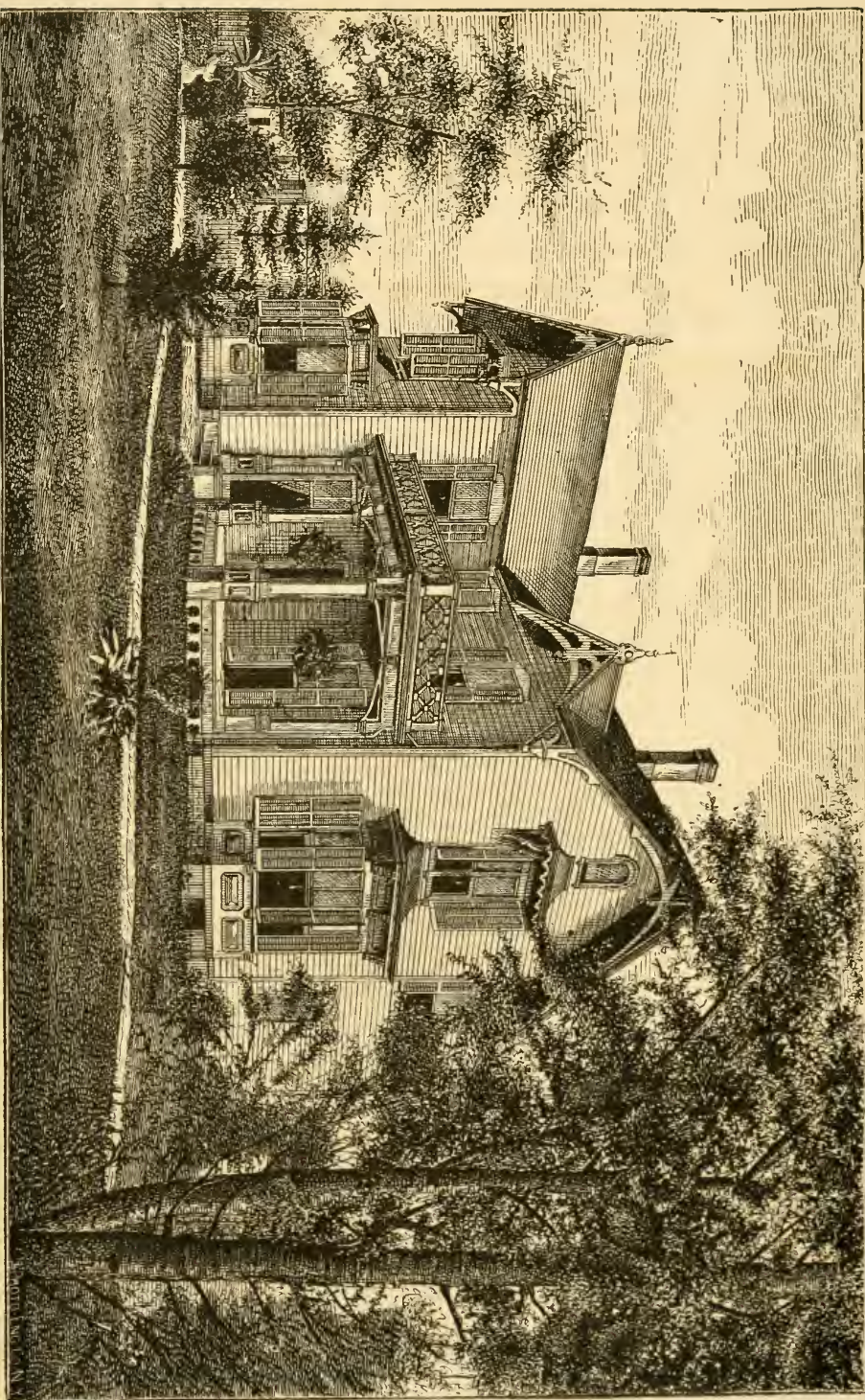
## CHAPTER XV.

### THE RECORD OF THE TOWN IN THE WAR OF THE REBELLION.

THE roar of the first gun fired on Sumter seemed to awaken echoes in every village and hamlet in New England. It was a shot fired at constitutional liberty and at the equal rights of man ; a blow struck at the best government and the best institutions on earth ; an assassin's knife aimed at the very heart of the Republic.

New England felt this in every part. The operatives in her workshops and factories ; the merchant and tradesman in their stores and counting-rooms ; the professor and student in her seminaries of learning, all felt the shock, and hastened to express their loyalty, and if necessary to sacrifice every thing that men hold dear rather than tamely submit to usurpation and wrong.

Ridgefield was among the first towns in the State to take decisive action in the matter. Public meetings were called, sentiments of purest loyalty expressed, and volunteers forwarded to the national capital. The following minutes, taken from the Town Records, will indicate the spirit of loyalty everywhere manifested.





## SPECIAL TOWN MEETING.

“ The Inhabitants of the Town of Ridgfield are hereby notified and warned that a special Town Meeting will be held at the Town-House, in said Ridgefield, on Saturday the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) day of May 1861, at 3 o'clock afternoon, for the purpose of making provision for the families of those persons in said Town who may volunteer their services to the United States ; to lay a tax, if necessary ; to give instructions to the Selectmen, if necessary ; and to make any appropriations ; and to take any other steps proper and necessary to fully carry out the purposes aforesaid.

“ EBENEZER HAWLEY, }  
“ AMOS SMITH, } *Selectmen.*  
“ SMITH KEELER, }

“ RIDGEFIELD, April 26, 1861.”

“ At a Special Town Meeting, holden May 4, 1861, in pursuance of the foregoing notice, William Lee was appointed Moderator, and Henry Smith, 2<sup>d</sup>, Clerk, *pro tem*.

“ On motion, it was voted that the following Preamble and Resolutions be, and they are hereby, adopted, viz :

“ ‘ *Whereas*, The people of the United States, within the Union, and under their own Government, have for three quarters of a century enjoyed an unparalleled prosperity and progress, for the continuance of which the Constitution of the United States is the perpetual guaranty ; and

“ ‘ *Whereas*, An armed rebellion now threatens the very existence of that Government, seizing the forts, arsenals, navy-yards, vessels, and hospitals which



belong to the people of the United States, and consummating its crime by firing upon the flag of the nation, the glorious symbol of our unity, our liberty, and our general welfare ;

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That it was the duty of all persons in the country to resort to the peaceful and legal means of redress provided by the Constitution, and that when, instead of so doing, they took up arms and organized resistance to the Government of the country, they struck at the very heart of organized civil society.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Government of the United States has properly sought by every kind of forbearance to avoid the sad necessity of asserting its authority by force of arms ; but that it is at length manifest to the whole world that it must subdue or be subdued.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That in forcibly maintaining that authority everywhere within its dominions, and at every cost, the Government wages no war of conquest, but simply does its duty, expecting every citizen to do the same, and to take care that the doom of the rebels and traitors, who would ruin the most beneficent government in the world, and so destroy the hope of free popular institutions forever, shall be swift, sudden, and overwhelming.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That when the supreme authority of the Government of the people of the United States shall have been completely established, we, with all other good citizens, will cheerfully co-operate in any measures that may be taken in accordance with the Constitution fully to consider and lawfully to redress all grievances that may anywhere be shown to exist, yielding ourselves, and expecting all others to yield to the will of the whole people constitutionally expressed.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That we, loyal citizens of Ridgefield, hereby before God and men, take the oath of fidelity to the sacred flag of our country, and to the cause of popular liberty and constitutional government which that flag represents, pledging ourselves to each other that by the love we bear our native land, and our un-



'faltering faith in the principles of our government, we will transmit to our children, unimpaired, the great heritage of blessings we have received from our fathers.'

"On motion, it was voted that an appropriation be made from the treasury of the Town of Ridgefield for the support of the families of the residents of this town who shall volunteer in accordance with the calls of the President of the United States, in the present national troubles; and the appropriation shall be expended as follows, viz. : to the wife of each volunteer the sum of two dollars per week, and fifty cents per week for each child that such volunteer may have dependent on him for support under twelve years of age, which shall be paid weekly; and such allowance shall continue weekly during the term of his voluntary enlistment.

"*Voted*, That a Committee of Three be appointed to draw all orders from the Treasury for the support of the families of those persons who may enlist in service of their country, in the present troubles, according to the foregoing resolutions.

"*Voted*, That Samuel M. Smith, William Lee, and William W. Beers, be, and they are hereby appointed said Committee.

"On motion adjourned.

"Attest, HENRY SMITH, 2<sup>d</sup> Clerk, *pro tem.*"

#### TOWN MEETING.

"By request of many of the Inhabitants of the Town of Ridgefield, a Special Town Meeting will be held at the Town-House, in said Ridgefield, on Satur-

day the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the present August, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, to take into consideration the propriety of paying a Town Bounty to all persons who may enlist before the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the present August, under the President's last call for three hundred thousand men, and to do other business necessary and legal.

“ EBENEZER HAWLEY, }  
“ AMOS SMITH, } *Selectmen.*  
“ SMITH KEELER, }

“ RIDGEFIELD, August 1, 1862.”

“ At a Special Town Meeting, holden August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1862, in pursuance of the foregoing notice, William Lee was appointed Moderator.

“ On motion, it was voted that the following Resolution be adopted :

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Town of Ridgefield authorize the Selectmen of said town to pay each volunteer who has enlisted under the present calls, or who shall enlist under said calls, the sum of two hundred dollars as bounty for the support of their families, if they have any ; if single, to be paid to the order of the volunteer, to be drawn by each volunteer in monthly instalments of twenty-five dollars, with the understanding that each enlistment thus made, shall go to relieve the good old Town of Ridgefield from a draft : Provided that the number is enlisted by the 15<sup>th</sup> of this present August ; and that after the requisite number to prevent a draft is raised, the said bounty shall not be paid.

“ ‘ *Voted*, That the Selectmen pay the same from the Treasury, or if the amount shall not be in the hands of the Treasurer, the Selectmen be authorized to borrow the same.

“ ‘ *Voted*, That whenever a volunteer shall present to the Selectmen a certificate of his having been accepted and sworn into the service of the United States in

some one of the Connecticut regiments, they shall draw orders on the Town Treasurer for the payment of the bounty just voted.'

" On motion, adjourned.

" Attest, L. H. BAILEY, *Town Clerk.*"

#### SPECIAL TOWN MEETING.

" Upon a petition of Jesse L. Benedict and sundry others, a special Town Meeting will be held at the Town-House, in Ridgefield, on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> inst., at 2 of the clock in the afternoon, for the purpose of making arrangements for filling the quota of this town's soldiers, by giving the same bounty to those that may volunteer, as has been given to those that have already volunteered ; or in case a draft shall be made, to vote a bounty to those that may be drafted.

" EBENEZER HAWLEY,	} <i>Selectmen.</i>
" AMOS SMITH,	
" SMITH KEELER,	

" RIDGEFIELD, September 1, 1862."

" At a Special Town Meeting, holden<sup>d</sup> September 6, 1862, in pursuance of the foregoing notice, Ebenezer Hawley was appointed Moderator.

" On motion, it was voted that the following Preamble and Resolutions be adopted :

" ' *Whereas*, The Town of Ridgefield in Special Town Meeting, held on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of August last, voted a bounty of two hundred dollars to each person who had already enlisted, or should before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of August ; and the time having been extended to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of September inst., therefore,

" ' *Resolved*, That the Selectmen be, and they are hereby authorized to pay to any person who shall enlist before the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the present month, or in

case of an extension of time, then said bounty to conform thereto, the sum of two hundred dollars, in monthly instalments of twenty-five dollars per month, upon the presentation of the proper vouchers that they have been accepted by the proper authorities ; providing said bounty shall not be paid to any person after seventy-seven volunteers have been enlisted, which is the number required by the said town.

“ ‘ *Whereas*, The Town of Ridgefield did, on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of August last, in Special Town Meeting, vote a bounty of two hundred dollars to such volunteers as had already enlisted, or such as might thereafter enlist, until the quota for Ridgefield under the last call of the President of the United States for six hundred thousand men should be filled, and

“ ‘ *Whereas*, A vote was also passed authorizing the Selectmen to borrow the money to pay said bounties, and believing said vote did not convey sufficient authority to said Selectmen to borrow the necessary amount of money ; therefore,

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Selectmen be, and are hereby requested to call another Town Meeting, to authorize the Town Treasurer to borrow from time to time, upon the credit of the Town, a sum not exceeding sixteen thousand dollars, for the purpose of paying the bounty that may have been voted ; and also to ratify and confirm the action of the Selectmen, in so far as they have borrowed money upon the credit of the town, and have paid a portion or portions of bounties heretofore made.’

“ On motion adjourned.

“ Attest,      L. H. BAILEY, *Town Clerk*.”

#### SPECIAL TOWN MEETING.

“ A Special Town Meeting will be held at the Town-House, in Ridgefield, on Saturday, Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>, at 3 o’clock P.M., for the purpose of authorizing the Town

Treasurer to borrow upon the credit of the town a sum not exceeding sixteen thousand dollars, for the purpose of paying the bounties that may have been voted ; and also to ratify and confirm the action of the Selectmen, in so far as they have borrowed money upon the credit of the town.

“ EBENEZER HAWLEY, }  
 “ AMOS SMITH, } *Selectmen.*  
 “ SMITH KEELER, }

“ RIDGEFIELD, September 8, 1862.”

“ At a Special Town Meeting, holden September 13<sup>th</sup> 1862, in pursuance of the foregoing notice, William Lee was appointed Moderator.

“ On motion, it was voted that the following Resolutions be adopted :

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Town Treasurer be, and he hereby is authorized to borrow, on the credit of the town, the sum of fifteen thousand four hundred dollars, on the best terms possible, for the purpose of paying the bounties voted to volunteers at the Special Town Meetings of August 9<sup>th</sup> and September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the action of the Selectmen in borrowing money to pay the first instalment of town bounty to volunteers be, and hereby is legalized and ratified by the town.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the several votes passed at the Special Town Meetings of August 9<sup>th</sup> and September 6<sup>th</sup>, in relation to bounties to volunteers from the town, to fill the quota for the six hundred thousand volunteers, be, and the same is hereby ratified and confirmed.’

“ On motion adjourned.

“ Attest, L. H. BAILEY, *Town Clerk.*”

“ At a Special Town Meeting of the Electors, held



at the Town-House on Saturday the 7th of February, 1863, the following resolution was passed :

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That a Committee of Seven be appointed (the Selectmen and Town Treasurer be a part of said Committee) to equalize the payment of the war debt of the Town of Ridgefield, and report at an adjourned meeting the best way to liquidate the same.

“ ‘ *Voted*, That Messrs Lewis H. Bailey, Hiram K. Scott, and George Keeler, Esqs., be that Committee.’

“ The meeting was adjourned to Saturday the 28th inst.”

“ At a meeting of the Legal Voters, held pursuant to adjournment on Saturday the 28th day of February, 1863, the meeting was called to order by Ebenezer Hawley, Moderator.

“ The Committee appointed at the meeting of February 7, 1863, presented their report.

“ It was moved and seconded that the Report of the Committee be accepted, and was carried in the affirmative.

“ Moved and seconded that the Resolutions recommended by the Committee be adopted.

“ Pending the discussion on the adoption of the Resolutions, it was moved and seconded that the following Resolutions be substituted for the Resolutions of the Committee, viz. :

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That under and by authority of an Act of the General Assembly of this State, passed December Session A.D. 1862, entitled “ An Act to authorize Towns, Cities, and Boroughs to issue Bonds or other Obligations for War Purposes,” to which Act reference is here had,

“ ‘ The Town of Ridgefield hereby authorizes and di-

rects the issue of Bonds in payment and liquidation of its expenses and liabilities incurred solely for the purposes named in said Act, to an amount not exceeding in the whole the sum of sixteen thousand dollars, in sums not less than fifty dollars nor greater than five hundred dollars ; all to bear date the first day of July, 1863, and made payable to order or bearer, at the option of the purchasers, with interest at the rate of six per cent per annum, and made payable and redeemable by the Treasurer of the Town of Ridgefield, at his office in said town, as follows, viz : The interest on the whole amount to be payable on the first day of July, 1864, and thereafter the interest to be paid by the said Treasurer on the succeeding first day of July in each year, on all of said Bonds unpaid, until the whole of principal and interest is paid ; and five hundred dollars of the principal to be paid on the first day of July, 1864 ; six hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1865 ; seven hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1866 ; eight hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1867 ; nine hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1868 ; one thousand dollars on the first day of July, 1869 ; eleven hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1870 ; twelve hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1871 ; thirteen hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1872 ; fourteen hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1873 ; fifteen hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1874 ; sixteen hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1875 ; seventeen hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1876 ; and seventeen hundred dollars on the first day of July, 1877.

“ ‘ The Bonds shall specify the amount of interest, when and where payable, and shall be signed by the First Selectman, and countersigned by the Town Treasurer, and registered upon the Town Records by the Town Clerk ; and when so executed, signed, countersigned, registered and delivered, shall be valid and of obligatory force and effect upon said town.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That hereafter, and until said Bonds

are paid or redeemed, according to their tenor, the Treasurer of said town is hereby directed, from year to year, to reserve from the tax or income of said town, on the first day of July in each year, such sum as shall be necessary and sufficient to pay the interest then due on all of such Bonds then outstanding ; and also such sum of the principal as shall fall due on the said first day of July, until the whole of said Bonds and interest are paid and redeemed ; and that this vote shall be printed upon the margin of each of said Bonds, and made and become, a part and condition of the contract between said town, and each bondholder.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Town Treasurer shall have the charge of said Bonds ; and with the advice and assistance of the Selectmen shall prepare the proper and necessary blanks ; and said Town Treasurer shall see to the proper execution and registering thereof, and with the assistance of the Selectmen shall sell and deliver the same to the best advantage, at not less than par value ; and said Treasurer shall make a register of all such Bonds, showing the amount and number of each Bond executed and sold, the date of sale, and the name of purchaser, which register shall be left with the Town Clerk, and when the Treasurer shall pay any of said Bonds, he shall cancel the same by crasing the signatures thereon, and shall also write upon the face of said Bonds cancelled, this            day of            , and sign the same, and note such cancellation in said register, and report the same to the Town Clerk ; and said Clerk shall thereupon enter upon the Town Records such cancellation : Provided that before said Town Treasurer shall have the charge and custody of said Bonds he shall give good and sufficient bond, with surety, to the acceptance of the Selectmen of said town, conditioned for the faithful discharge of said trust ; and said Selectmen and Town Treasurer shall attach interest coupons to said Bonds.

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Town Treasurer shall apply the avails of said Bonds, in payment of expenses or liabilities incurred for any matter connected with, or growing out of the raising, equipment, or subsistence of volunteers or militia, to serve in the armies of the United States, as provided in said Act, and for no other purpose whatsoever.’ ”

“ And the resolutions so offered and substituted were declared by the Moderator to be carried in the affirmative.

“ At a Special Town Meeting of the Electors, held pursuant to notice, at the Town-House, March 7, 1863, it was

“ ‘ *Voted*, That the Resolutions passed at an adjourned Town Meeting, holden February 28, 1863, in relation to issuing of War Bonds, be reconsidered in all that relates to the date of said Bonds, the time when the interest and the several payments shall be made, and reserving of tax or income.

“ ‘ *Voted*, That the said Resolutions be so amended as to make said Bonds all bear date April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863; that the interest on the whole amount be paid on the first day of October, 1863, and the interest payable thereafter on all of said Bonds unpaid on the first day of October in each succeeding year; until the whole amount is paid; and the first payment of five hundred dollars to be made October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1864; and the several payments to be made on the first day of October in each year, instead of the first day of July; also the appropriation from tax or income.

“ ‘ *Voted*, That this meeting be now adjourned.’ ”

“ Attest,      HENRY SMITH, 2<sup>d</sup>, *Town Clerk*.”

“ At a Special Town Meeting of the Electors, held at the Town-House, July 25, 1863, the following Resolution was offered and adopted :

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Treasurer of the Town of Ridgefield shall pay to the proper officers appointed to receive the same, the sum of three hundred dollars for each person who shall be drafted in accordance with the Act entitled ‘ An Act for enrolling and calling out the National Forces, and for other Purposes.’

“ The meeting then adjourned.

“ HENRY SMITH, 2<sup>d</sup>, *Town Clerk*.”

“ At a special Town Meeting, held at the Town-House, August 7, 1863, the following Resolutions were offered and adopted :

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That the Town Treasurer be, and he hereby is authorized and directed to pay out of the Town Treasury the sum of three hundred dollars to each person who may be drafted, accepted, and mustered into the United States service, under the late call for three hundred thousand men by the President of the United States, for three years, or during the war ; or to the drafted man who shall furnish an able-bodied substitute, who shall be accepted and mustered into the United States service.

“ ‘ *Voted*, That the Selectmen and Town Treasurer be, and they hereby are authorized and instructed to borrow, upon the credit of the town, a sum of money sufficient to pay the said three hundred dollars to each of said persons who may comply with the above vote.’

“ The meeting then adjourned.

“ HENRY SMITH, 2<sup>d</sup>, *Town Clerk*.”

“ At a Special Town Meeting, held October 20, 1863, the following Resolutions were offered and adopted :

“ ‘ *Voted*, That the Town Treasurer be, and he hereby is authorized and directed to pay out of the Town Treasury the sum of three hundred dollars to each person



who has been drafted and accepted into the United States service, under the late call for three hundred thousand men by the President of the United States for three years, or during the war ; or to the drafted man who shall furnish an able-bodied substitute who shall be accepted into the United States service.

“ ‘*Voted*, That the Selectmen and Town Treasurer be, and they are hereby authorized and instructed to borrow, upon the credit of the town, a sum of money sufficient to pay the said three hundred dollars to each of said persons who may comply with the above vote.

“ ‘*Voted*, That all votes taken at previous meetings conflicting with the above votes are hereby declared to be null and void.

“ ‘*Voted*, That Ebenezer Hawley and Ebenezer Jones be, and they hereby are appointed a Committee to attend at Bridgeport, on Wednesday or Thursday of the present week (as they may deem best), and pay to all such persons as have been drafted and accepted, or who have or may furnish a substitute who has or may be accepted, a sum of money not exceeding three hundred dollars, in accordance with the vote passed this day.’

“ On motion adjourned.

“ Attest,            A. N. THOMAS, *Town Clerk*.”

“ At a Special Town Meeting, held pursuant to notice, at the Town-House, January 2, 1864, the following Resolutions were offered and adopted :

“ ‘*Resolved*, That this town appropriate a sum not exceeding two thousand dollars, to defray the expenses of Ebenezer Hawley, recruiting officer for this town, in filling our quota under the last call of the President.

“ ‘*Resolved*, That the Selectmen of the town be authorized to borrow, on the credit of the town, a sufficient sum for the above purpose, provided there are not sufficient funds in the Town Treasury.’

“ Attest,            A. N. THOMAS, *Town Clerk*.”

## “ NOTICE.

“ The Legal Electors of the Town of Ridgefield are hereby warned that a Special Town Meeting will be held at the Town-House, in said Ridgefield, on Saturday, August 6, 1864, at 2 o'clock P.M., for the purpose of taking such action as may be deemed expedient and necessary to encourage volunteering, and filling the quota of this town under the last call of the President of the United States for five hundred thousand men ; and to make an appropriation from the town Treasury of such sum of money as may be necessary to pay such as may volunteer or be drafted in case said quota is not filled by volunteering ; and also to appoint a recruiting agent, or agents, for the town ; also, to authorize the Selectmen and Town Treasurer to borrow, upon the credit of the town, by Bonds or otherwise, a sufficient sum of money to defray the expense of procuring the requisite number of men to fill said call.

“ EBENEZER HAWLEY, }  
“ DAVID C. KEELER, } *Selectmen.*  
“ DANIEL HUNT, }

“ RIDGEFIELD, July 29, 1866.”

“ At a Special Town Meeting of the Legal Voters of the Town of Ridgefield, held at the Town-House on Saturday, August 6, 1864, in pursuance of the above call, Samuel Scott was appointed by the Selectmen and Town Clerk Moderator of said meeting.

“ On motion of Henry Smith, Esq., the following Resolutions were offered :

“ ‘ *Resolved*, That in order to fill the quota of the Town of Ridgefield, under the last call of the President

of the United States for five hundred thousand men, this town hereby appropriate from the Treasury of the town a sum of money not exceeding nineteen thousand dollars, for the purpose of defraying the expenses attending the filling of said quota, and to pay volunteers who have already enlisted under this present call, and who shall apply to the credit of the town, or all who may hereafter enlist under this call, and in case the requisite number is not obtained by volunteering, then to pay to drafted men (in case there be such), who may be mustered into the service of the United States, a sum like unto that which may be paid to volunteers, and also to pay a like sum of money to such person or persons as shall furnish a recruit who shall be mustered into the United States service, said recruit to apply to the quota of this town, and shall apply to the credit of such person or persons as shall furnish such substitute recruit, upon the proper vouchers being presented to the Treasurer of said town.

“ ‘*Resolved*, That H. K. Scott, L. H. Bailey, and John D. Hurlbutt be, and hereby are appointed a Committee to procure volunteers and substitutes to fill the quota of the said town, and said committee are hereby authorized to pay to each volunteer, substitute, recruit, or drafted man, or his substitute, who shall be mustered into the United States service, a sum of money not exceeding five hundred dollars; and said Committee are hereby authorized and empowered to draw orders on the Treasurer of the town for money sufficient for that purpose; and the Town Treasurer is hereby instructed and directed to pay out of the Treasury such sums as may be drawn for by said Committee; providing always that such sums in the aggregate shall not exceed the said sum of nineteen thousand dollars.

“ ‘*Resolved*, That the Town Treasurer and Selectmen of this town be, and they hereby are authorized and directed to borrow, upon the credit of the town, in

such manner as they may deem best, a sum of money not exceeding nineteen thousand dollars, for the purpose of placing the funds in the Treasury, to pay the amount authorized in the foregoing resolutions.'

"The above resolutions, on motion, were adopted.

"*'Moved and adopted*, That the Selectmen and Town Treasurer be an Advisory Committee with and for the above appointed Committee.

"*'Moved*, That the second resolution be reconsidered. Carried.

"*'Moved*, That after the words 'drafted man,' the words 'or his substitute,' be inserted, and then accepted.' Carried.

"The following Resolutions were then offered :

"*'Resolved*, That any person or persons furnishing a substitute recruit, shall furnish to the Recruiting Committee satisfactory evidence of the amount that they have actually paid for such substitute, and shall receive only such sum as actually expended ; providing always that such sum shall not exceed five hundred dollars.

"*'Resolved*, That the Committee just appointed shall draw from the enrolled subjects in the town as many names as they shall furnish substitutes ; and such names so drawn shall be exempt for three years ; providing such person whose name so drawn is a military subject ; and the town shall pay the travelling expenses of those who may be exempted by the surgeon.

"The foregoing Resolutions were, on motion, adopted :

"*'Moved*, That the Committee use discretionary power in regard to the draft, as to when, and how, and what number to draw at a time.' Carried.

"The meeting, on motion, then adjourned. .

"Attest,       ALBERT N. THOMAS, *Town Clerk.*"

"Notice is hereby given that a Special Town Meeting will be held at the Town-House, in Ridgefield, on Saturday, the 10th inst., at 1 o'clock P.M., for the purpose of appointing an agent or agents to fill, in the best possible manner, the quota of men that may be called for by the President of the United States from the Town of Ridgefield, and to make the necessary appropriations from the Treasury of said town to defray the expenses of filling said quota.

"WILLIAM LEE,	} <i>Selectmen.</i>
"TIMOTHY JONES,	
"WILLIAM W. BEERS,	
"SAML S. ST. JOHN,	
"GEORGE BOUGHTON,	

"RIDGEFIELD, CT., Dec. 5, 1864."

"At a Special Town Meeting of the Legal Voters of the Town of Ridgefield, held at the Town-House, on Saturday, December 10, 1864, in pursuance of the above call, William Lee was appointed by the Selectmen and Town Clerk Moderator of said meeting.

"*'Moved, That we adjourn for the space of thirty minutes.'* Carried.

"Pursuant to the foregoing adjournment, met at the expiration of time mentioned, when the following Resolutions or Votes were offered :

"*'Resolved, That the Town Treasurer of the Town of Ridgefield be, and he hereby is authorized and directed to borrow, on the credit and for the general purposes of the town, such sum or sums of money as shall be approved by the Selectmen, not exceeding ten*



thousand dollars, either on temporary or permanent loan, at his direction, and to execute all proper notes and obligations therefor as such Treasurer.

“ *Resolved*, That Timothy Jones and John D. Hurlbutt be, and are hereby appointed a Committee on behalf of this town, duly authorized and directed to procure the enlistment into the military service of the United States, on the quota of Ridgefield, of so many men as may in their opinion be hereafter required on any anticipated or pending draft or drafts, under the following restrictions: That all persons who will pay the sum of one hundred dollars each, for the purpose of procuring a substitute, for three years, to the Treasurer of the town, within ten days, shall be entitled to a substitute in his own name. And in case more persons shall pay said sum within said ten days than is necessary to fill the quota (in the judgment of the Committee), the Committee shall designate by lot the names of those who shall be furnished with substitutes; and the Committee shall put on no more substitutes than there are persons who may pay the one hundred dollars; and said Committee shall draw orders on the Treasurer of the town for such sum or sums of money as they shall from time to time require to meet the expenses incurred by their vote, duly signed by the Selectmen; and said Selectmen are duly authorized to fill any vacancy or vacancies which may occur in said Committee.

“ *Resolved*, That the Town Treasurer be, and hereby is authorized and directed to pay all orders drawn by the Committee, for the purpose named in the foregoing Resolution, out of any funds now in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated.’

“ On motion, the above Resolutions were carried.

“ *Moved*, That the Committee appointed to fill the quota be, and are hereby instructed to have the names of such invalid persons as are not military subjects, whose names appear in the enrolment, stricken

from the same ; and when instances require the transportation of the same to and from Bridgeport, the Committee be instructed to have the same attended to at the expense of the town. The motion was carried.

“*Moved*, That the Committee use discretionary power as to time, etc., in taking such persons to and from Bridgeport.” Carried.

“On motion adjourned.

“Attest,                      A. N. THOMAS, *Town Clerk*.”

“NOTICE.

“The Legal Voters of the Town of Ridgefield are hereby warned to attend a Special Town Meeting, at the Town-Hall, in said Ridgefield, on Saturday, the 18th day of February, 1865, at 1 o’clock P.M., for the purpose of hearing the report of the Recruiting Committee, appointed at a Special Town Meeting holden at said Town-Hall, on the 11th day of December, 1864, and to take such action in relation to recruiting for said town, on the call of the President of the United States for three hundred thousand men, as said meeting shall deem expedient.

“WILLIAM LEE,	} <i>Selectmen</i> .
“TIMOTHY JONES,	
“WILLIAM W. BEERS,	
“SAMUEL S. ST. JOHN,	
“GEORGE BOUGHTON,	

“RIDGEFIELD, CT., February 11, 1865.”

“At a Special Town Meeting of the Legal Voters of the Town of Ridgefield, held at the Town-House, on Saturday, February 18, 1865, in pursuance of the above call, Hiram K. Scott, Esq., was chosen Chairman of said meeting.

“The Report of the Recruiting Committee, ap-

pointed at Special Town Meeting, was presented and read, as follows :

“ The undersigned persons, who were appointed recruiting agents for the Town of Ridgefield, at a Special Town Meeting held in this place on December 10, 1864, beg leave to make the following report :

“ On account of the small number attending said meeting, immediate efforts were made by said agents to give notice throughout the town of the action taken at the above-mentioned meeting. The following named persons paid into the Town Treasury each one hundred dollars, within the time required by said meeting:

John S. Keeler,	Charles B. Staples,
Isaac P. Howe,	John T. Hunt,
David Daw,	Charles Lockwood,
Samuel Beers,	Smith Gage,
Henry A. Stuart,	Clark Keeler, 2 <sup>d</sup> ,
Benjamin F. Bradley,	Edward T. Hunt,
John B. Smith,	

amounting to thirteen in number. Your agents proceeded at once to the marshal's office in Bridgeport, for the purpose of acquitting themselves fully of the duty assigned them.

“ They found upon the enrolment at said office about one hundred and eighty names registered as military subjects for this town. Sixty of these, from various causes, were erased, leaving at this time about one hundred and twenty-five enrolled, including additions necessary to be made. They also negotiated with Seth J. Benedict, of Bridgeport, to furnish us with the requisite number of recruits for said town, who agreed to furnish at \$630 per man, costing the town for each man the sum of \$230. Two substitutes were enlisted under this contract, one for John S. Keeler and one

for Henry A. Stuart, when an order was issued by Provost-Marshal General Fry requiring the principal in all cases to be present at the time of enlistment. The effect of this order was almost to stop business at the office ; and also Mr. Benedict did not consider himself any longer bound by the former contract with your agents. Also the price of substitutes advanced from \$630 to \$775. Your agents, controlled by their own judgment, held the opinion that this sudden advance in the price of men was fictitious, and that men would soon be of less price. Consequently they returned home, with the intention of awaiting the result, whatever that might be. They also communicated with brokers elsewhere, and became satisfied that the increase of price was not confined to Bridgeport alone. Mr. Benedict also informed us every few days what the prospect was with him, the substance of which was the price remained for several weeks at the last-named figures, and that very few men passed examination out of the large number presented. Your agents would also state that immediately after the publication of the above order there was a decrease in the number of substitutes for three years. Men mostly preferred to go as volunteers ; with such your agents had no power, according to the vote of the town by which we held authority. In the meantime a young man by the name of Marcus J. Olmsted proposed to volunteer for this town, and the Selectmen took upon themselves the responsibility of closing a bargain with him, which cost the town about \$110. Your agents enlisted him under authority of the Selectmen. A few more weeks elapsed, and the time appointed for the draft was near at hand. Your agents



again proceeded to Bridgeport with the determination of procuring the men at any thing less than an unreasonable price. They found matters not improved any since their visit—men still high and scarce. We sent two principals, being anxious of carrying out the vote of the town relative to the principals if possible ; but after two days of fruitless effort they returned.

“ Mr. Benedict, hearing that the men could be enlisted in the navy without the principals being present, went to New York City to see if he could secure any men for us ; but all his efforts were fruitless. He then went to Boston for the same purpose, but returned with the same result. Thinking it best, in view of the above facts, that a statement of our endeavors should be made to the town, we prayed that this meeting might be called for such purpose, and also that action might be taken by your honorable body as to the course to be pursued in the future. All of which is respectfully submitted.

“ TIMOTHY JONES,        } *Recruiting*  
 “ JOHN D. HURLBUTT, } *Agents.*

“ RIDGEFIELD, CT., February 18, 1865.”

“ ‘*Moved*, That the foregoing report of the Recruiting Agents be, and is hereby accepted, and said agents are released and discharged from further duty as recruiting agents, which was carried.

“ ‘*Moved*, That the Town Treasurer be, and hereby is authorized to refund to those individuals having money deposited in his hands for substitutes, such sums as they have paid him, except the two who have had substitutes furnished in their names, which also was carried.

“ ‘*Moved*, That we do now adjourn.’

“ Attest,            ALBERT N. THOMAS, *Town Clerk.*”



The following persons represented the Town of Ridgefield, Ct., during the war of the Rebellion:

NAME.	REG'T.	Co.	MUSTERED IN.	DISCHARGED.
Avery, Treadwell.....	1st Art'y.	E.	Jan. 5, 1864.	Sept. 25, 1865.
Austin, David.....	17th.	C.	Aug. 11, 1862.	July 10, 1865.
"    Hiram.....	"	"	"    "	Sept. 25, 1863.
"    Jacob.....	"	"	"    "	July 19, 1865.
Avery, W. Charles....	"	"	"    "	Jan. 19, 1863.
"    William.....	"	"	Jan. 6, 1864.	
Avaunt, William.....	"	"	Jan. 15, 1862.	March 29, 1863.
Brown, Franklin.....	"	"	Jan. 13, 1862.	Feb. 24, 1863.
"    Jefferson.....	"	"	Jan. 12, 1862.	Oct. 20, 1863.
"    Nehemiah.....	"	"	"    "	Sept. 25, 1865.
Benedict, Charles H...	"	"	Aug. 12, 1862.	Feb. 26, 1863.
Bennett, Alfred.....	"	"	July 26, 1862.	Jan. 17, 1863.
Brinkerhoff, B. F.....	"	"	July 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Benjamin, C. M.....	9th.	K.	April 1, 1862.	April 25, 1862.
Burt, Francis E.....	10th.	G.	Oct. 2, 1861.	Aug. 16, 1865.
"    Charles H.....	"	"	Feb. 26, 1862.	Sept. 11, 1864.
Baxter, Samuel B.....	11th.	B.	Dec. 16, 1863.	Oct. 25, 1864.
Bates, Francis H.....	12th.	E.	Dec. 31, 1861.	Aug. 12, 1865.
Brown, James P.....	15th.	B.	Aug. 6, 1862.	June 27, 1865.
Bradley, D. B.....	23d.	G.	Sept. 7, 1862.	July 7, 1863.
Burt, Stephen.....	"	"	"    "	Aug. 31, 1863.
Barker, William E.....	"	K.	Sept. 5, 1862.	"    "
Bentley, Benjamin....	....	..	Oct. 23, 1863.	
Bahreng, Ernest.....	....	..	Nov. 7, 1863.	
Beers, Charles.....	1st Art'y.	E.	Jan. 5, 1864.	Sept. 25, 1865.
Betts, William H.....	5th.	G.	March 17, 1862.	Oct. 17, 1863.
Boyle, Richard.....	....	..	Oct. 20, 1863.	
Burns, John.....	....	..	"    "	
Burr, Daniel D.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Carney, Lawrence.....	"	"	Aug. 14, 1862.	July 1, 1863.
Creedan, William.....	"	"	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Coe, Henry.....	5th.	..	July 22, 1861.	
Casey, William E.....	15th.	B.	Feb. 5, 1862.	Jan. 6, 1865.
Canfield, S. C.....	"	"	Aug. 6, 1862.	June 27, 1865.
Compton, Joseph.....	....	..	Jan. 5, 1864.	
Dauchy, J. L.....	11th.	A.	Oct. 24, 1861.	Sept. 13, 1865.
De Forest, Sylvester...	"	"	"    "	Dec. 20, 1862.
Davis, James W.....	12th.	E.	Dec. 31, 1861.	Aug. 12, 1865.
Dykeman, Nirum. ...	17th.	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	Nov. 17, 1862.
Dove, D. G.....	"	"	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Dickens, Charles H...	"	"	Aug. 11, 1862.	Jan. 14, 1863.
Dann, Levi.....	23d.	E.	Sept. 5, 1862.	Aug. 31, 1863.
Davis, George.....	....	..	Oct. 24, 1863.	

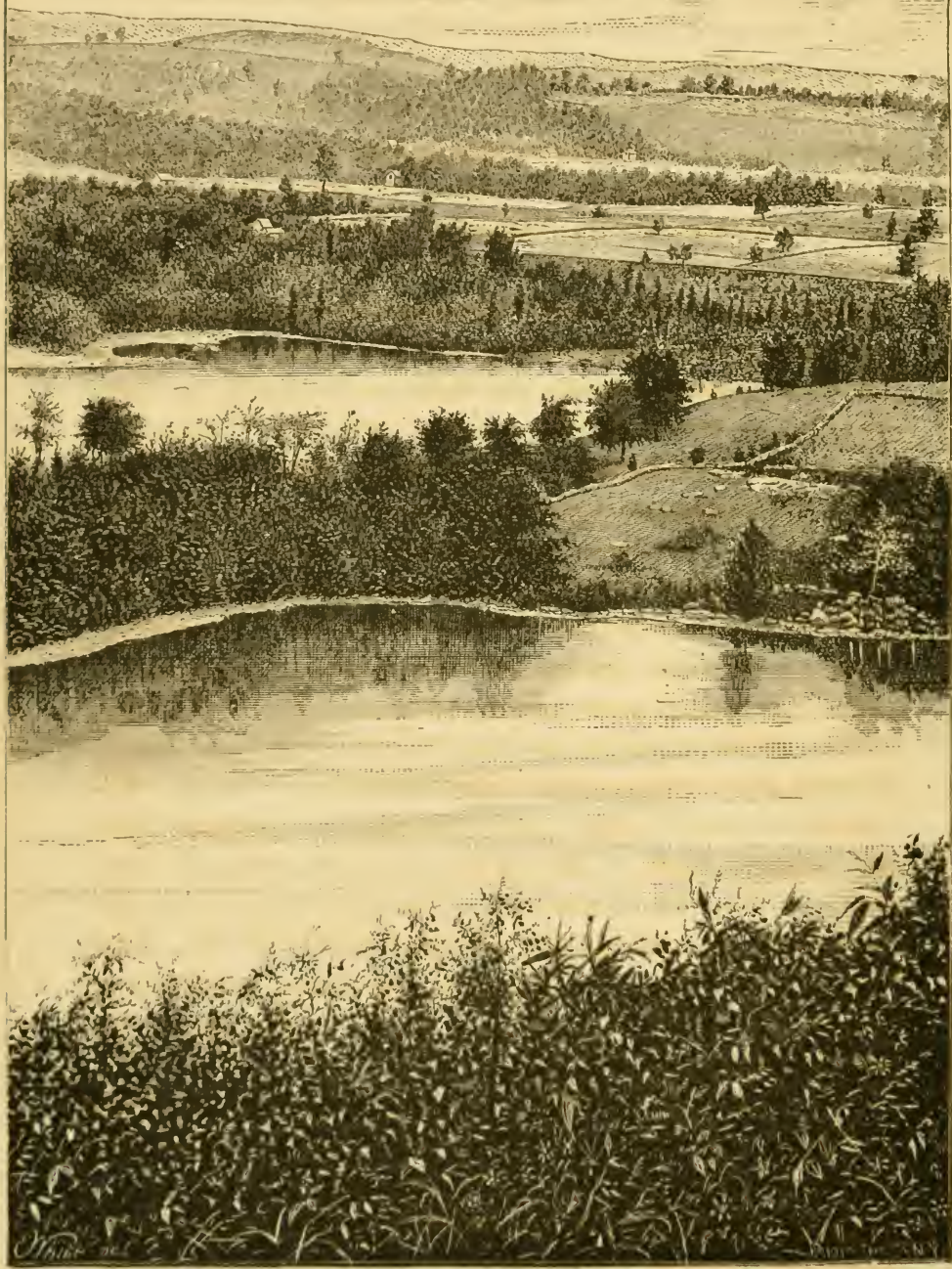
NAME.	REG'T.	Co.	MUSTERED IN.	DISCHARGED.
Degeneres, Charles....	....	..	Oct. 22, 1863.	
Devins, George.....	....	..	Sept. 23, 1861.	
Edmond, E. H.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	Feb. 27, 1863.
Enright, James.....	23d.	"	Sept. 7, 1862.	Aug. 31, 1863.
Finch, N. A.....	17th.	"	Aug. 14, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Fry, John G.....	"	"	Aug. 13, 1862.	Jan. 18, 1863.
Foote, Gaius St. John..	"	H.	Aug. 16, 1862.	Nov. 17, 1863.
Faroon, Robert.....	"	C.	Aug. 12, 1862.	May, 1863.
Fox, Aaron.....	....	..	Sept. 23, 1861.	
Godfrey, George F....	17th.	G.	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Gilbert, Smith.....	"	"	Aug. 14, 1862.	Feb. 14, 1863.
Gregory, David.....	"	"	Aug. 13, 1862.	Dec. 10, 1862.
Gilbert, John.....	5th.	A.	July 22, 1861.	July 22, 1864.
" George.....	"	E.	" "	Aug. 5, 1864.
" Edwin B.....	"	"	" "	July 19, 1865.
Grumman, Frederick A.	"	"	March 3, 1864.	Sept. 7, 1864.
Godfrey, Sylvester....	8th.	H.	Sept. 23, 1861.	Sept. 18, 1864.
Gage, Edwin B.....	11th.	A.	Oct. 24, 1861.	Dec. 21, 1865.
" Rhomanza.....		"	" "	May 10, 1862.
Gilbert, Charles F....	12th.	E.	Nov. 30, 1861.	July 3, 1865.
Grannis, John H.....	17th.	C.	July 26, 1862.	Aug. 30, 1864.
Gray, George.....	"	G.	Aug. 15, 1862.	March 28, 1863.
Gilbert, Charles.....	23d.	"	Oct. 31, 1862.	Aug. 31, 1863.
Gage, Seely.....	"	K.	Sept. 6, 1862.	
Gibbons, Edward.....	....	..	Oct. 24, 1863.	
Gilbert, Charles.....	....	..	Oct. 22, 1863.	
Harrington, John H...	17th.	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Hoyt, John W.....	"	"	Aug. 12, 1862.	June 28, 1863.
Hull, Silas.....	"	"	Aug. 13, 1862.	March 25, 1863.
Holmes, J. W.....	"	"	July 26, 1862.	June 8, 1864.
Hall, Ezra S.....	"	"	Aug. 12, 1862.	Jan. 27, 1863.
Hendricks, Henry. ...	8th.	H.	Sept. 23, 1861.	May 1, 1865.
Hubbell, Frank.....	"	"	" "	Sept. 22, 1864.
Hendricks, David.....	....	..	" "	
Judd, Horace I.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 13, 1862.	Aug. 12, 1865.
Jennings, Charles A...	"	"	" "	July 1, 1865.
" William H...	"	"	" "	March 9, 1865.
Jarvis, J. J.....	"	"	Aug. 11, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Juergens, Theodore...	6th.	C.	Oct. 11, 1863.	Aug. 11, 1865.
John, Frederick.....	....	..	Oct. 24, 1863.	
Johnson, Samuel J...	....	..	Nov. 3, 1863.	
" William L...	....	..	Dec. 22, 1863.	
Knapp, Henry.....	1st Art'y.	E.	Jan. 5, 1864.	Sept. 25, 1865.
" Lewis.....		"	" "	" "
Keeler, O. H.....	5th.	A.	July 22, 1861.	July 22, 1864.
Keeler, Rufus D.....	5th.	K.	March 17, 1862.	Dec. 19, 1862.
" Smith.....	10th.	G.	Oct. 9, 1861.	Dec. 10, 1862.

NAME.	REG'T.	Co.	MUSTERED IN.	DISCHARGED.
Keeler, Eli J.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Klinefelter, J. C.....	23d.	"	Sept. 7, 1862.	Aug. 31, 1863.
Keeler, Oscar H.....	....	..	July 22, 1861.	
Lockwood, Andrew....	17th.	G.	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Lee, A. W.....	"	"	Aug. 11, 1862.	" "
Lockwood, William H.	5th.	A.	July 22, 1861.	" "
Lannon, Patrick.....	11th.	"	Oct. 24, 1861.	Oct. 24, 1864.
Lounsbury, P. C.....	17th.	C.	Aug. 11, 1862.	Dec. 24, 1863.
Les, Jort.....	....	..	Oct. 22, 1863.	
Lloyd, Michael.....	....	..	Jan. 5, 1864.	
Mead, Smith.....	5th.	A.	July 22, 1861.	March 14, 1863.
Merritt, William M....	7th.	D.	Sept. 5, 1861.	Sept. 12, 1864.
Moffatt, Edward.....	"	"	" "	" "
Mead, Benjamin L....	13th.	B.	Feb. 5, 1862.	Nov. 14, 1865.
" Jeremiah O.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Main, James C.....	"	"	Aug. 11, 1862.	" "
Monroe, A. L.....	"	"	" "	Dec. 29, 1862.
McConnell, John.....	"	"	" "	July 19, 1865.
Mead, R. N.....	"	"	" "	Nov. 29, 1862.
Maher, Dennis.....	....	..	Oct. 21, 1863.	
Northrop, David, 2d...	17th.	G.	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Nickerson, B. V.....	"	"	Aug. 11, 1862.	April 13, 1863.
Northrop, John.....	7th.	D.	Oct. 30, 1863.	Aug. 18, 1864.
Osterman, Frank.....	....	..	Oct. 24, 1863.	
Oakley, Miles.....	....	..	Jan. 5, 1864.	
Platt, Alfred.....	1st Art'y.	B.	Jan. 22, 1862.	Sept. 25, 1865.
Phelan, S. S.....	"	G.	Dec. 9, 1863.	April 7, 1865.
Platt, Charles.....	10th.	"	Dec. 11, 1863.	Aug. 25, 1865.
" George.....	"	"	" "	" "
Payne, Thomas.....	11th.	A.	Oct. 24, 1861.	April 27, 1862.
Pickett, E. D.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 9, 1862.	July 1, 1863.
Prichard, William. ...	....	..	Oct. 22, 1863.	
Rasco, C. B.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	Dec. 10, 1862.
Rich, Jared.....	"	"	Sept. 2, 1862.	Dec. 4, 1862.
Rhan, C. A.....	"	"	Aug. 12, 1862.	July 10, 1865.
Roche, James T.....	2d Art'y.	I.	Jan. 29, 1864.	Aug. 18, 1865.
Rasco, James.....	5th.	A.	July 22, 1861.	Nov. 16, 1862.
Ruggles, Elbert.....	13th.	B.	Feb. 18, 1862.	April 25, 1864.
" Sidney B....	"	"	Feb. 5, 1862.	April 25, 1865.
Raymond, Amos.....	17th.	C.	July 19, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Ruff, Anthony.....	....	..	Oct. 22, 1863.	
Rowley, John.....	....	..	Nov. 2, 1863.	
Scot, John A.....	....	..	Jan. 5, 1864.	
Smith, S. H.....	17th.	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	July 10, 1865.
Stevens, Levi B.....	1st Art'y.	E.	Dec. 21, 1863.	Sept. 25, 1865.
Selleck, Eben.....	"	I.	Jan. 5, 1864.	Sept. 25, 1865.
Scofield, O. K.....	7th.	D.	Sept. 5, 1861.	July 20, 1865.

NAME.	REG'T.	CO.	MUSTERED IN.	DISCHARGED.
Stone, Irving.....	7th.	..	June 11, 1863.	July 31, 1863.
Smith, A. V. S.....	8th.	H.	Oct. 16, 1861.	Jan. 20, 1864.
Sturges, Frederick L..	13th.	B.	Feb. 5, 1862.	Dec. 12, 1862.
Smith, Charles, Jr....	17th.	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Seymour, Fr. E.....	"	"	Aug. 15, 1862.	April 26, 1863.
Smith, Allen.....	"	"	Aug. 13, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Stevens, George W....	"	"	Aug. 14, 1862.	" "
Smith, David E.....	23d.	E.	Sept. 5, 1862.	Aug. 31, 1863.
Thomas, John.....	8th.	H.	March 14, 1864.	May 19, 1865.
Ulmer, Charles.....	....	..	Jan. 5, 1864.	
Van Scoy, John A....	13th.	B.	Feb. 20, 1862.	Nov. 27, 1864.
Viely, John.....	....	..	Oct. 21, 1863.	
Williams, Sylvester....	17th.	G.	Aug. 12, 1862.	July 19, 1865.
Wood, George L.....	"	"	Aug. 13, 1862.	Feb. 13, 1864.
Williams, Hawley....	8th.	H.	Sept. 23, 1861.	Dec. 12, 1865.
" Sidney.....	"	"	" "	" "
Warren, Rufus.....	17th.	C.	Aug. 11, 1862.	July 17, 1863.
Whitlock, Joseph H...	"	"	July 25, 1862.	
" Nephi.....	"	"	" "	July 24, 1865.
White, E. P.....	"	G.	Aug. 11, 1862.	Aug. 10, 1865.
Word, George L.....	....	..	Aug. 13, 1862.	Feb. 13, 1864.
Weed, William A.....	....	..	Jan. 5, 1864.	
Walters, John M.....	....	..	July 25, 1862.	







THE LAKE VIEW FROM WEST MOUNTAIN —WACCABUC IN THE DISTANCE.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### PRESENT CONDITION OF THE TOWN.

THE one hundred and seventy years of its history have wrought of necessity many and great changes in the town ; and yet not so many or so great as have often been produced by a score of years in many of our Western towns, or in those which have been opened to the public by some grand trunk line of railway.

Its growth has been in every sense gradual. It has been built up by the dollars earned by its own people, and in most part by the dollars which have grown out of its own soil. A steady and habitual industry, a close and careful economy have borne their legitimate fruit. Thus the slow growth of the town has in reality given permanency and strength to it.

Nearly every house is owned by its occupant, and nearly every foot of soil by the one who tills it. The people are mainly farmers and mechanics, the exception being about equally divided between the merchants and those who, having elsewhere obtained a competency, have returned to their native town to make for themselves a home.

Ridgefield Street, the only part of the town which makes any pretensions to being a village, is situated on the exact spot where, eightscore and ten years ago, the first settlers located. Embowered in trees of a century's growth, with walks and lawns well kept,

the first impression of every stranger is its home-like appearance. A quiet like that of the Sabbath rests upon it, and an atmosphere wholesome and moral everywhere pervades it. It is in every respect a fine specimen of an old New England town, where culture and refinement have long enough existed to stamp themselves upon the very faces as well as the hearts and homes of the people.

The churches are all in a prosperous condition, and related to each other by the kindest Christian sympathy. The church buildings are well kept, and the "old-fashioned" gospel—of salvation alone through Jesus Christ—regularly preached. Indeed the *morale* of the town is excellent. The vices and immoralities so common in larger places are almost unknown.

In the year 1872 the town, by a large majority, voted "*no license*," and the few who publicly sold intoxicating drinks were compelled to respect the vote. Of late a new and deeper interest in the subject of temperance reform has sprung up among the people, and the feasibility of doing away even with cider-drinking is strongly advocated.

Until quite recently the village has changed but little in size or general appearance for the last half century. The past few years, however, have witnessed quite a change. New streets have been laid out on East Ridge by its enterprising owner, L. H. Bailey, Esq., and a number of new dwellings been erected; while on the main street several old residences have been greatly improved and new ones added.

Mr. P. C. Lounsbury having purchased the property best known as the "Dr. Perry Place," has made many marked and modern improvements about the house



and grounds—improvements which are still going on, and which, when completed, will make his residence second to none in the town.

J. Howard King, Esq., of Albany, has also remodelled and greatly improved his summer home, at an expense of many thousand dollars. He has converted the “Brick House” into a palatial residence. He has also purchased the property on High Ridge, and is greatly improving it. The street has been widened and adorned with young shade trees, in the same manner as Prospect Avenue, rustic gateways put up, and a pleasant observatory erected on the very top of the hill. There are many fine views in town, but none which equal in every particular the view to be obtained from the summit of this delightful ridge. On a clear bright morning, or just at evening, one may sit here and feast his eye upon almost all that is beautiful in nature : the far-away mountains fencing in the horizon ; the nearer hills, rising with less pretension from the intervening plains ; the deep blue waters of the Sound, reflecting the slanting rays of sunlight ; the clear white thread of sand which marks the shore of Long Island ; the purple haze of the still more remote parts of the island, which gradually lose themselves in the boundaries of vision ; the gently receding fields, which seem imperceptibly to dip down to the very surface of the waters, dotted here and there with farm-houses and church-spires, and last, but not least, the broken and uneven upland, which reminds one of the “hill country of Judea,” leading away the eye towards the sunrising.

In the year 1876 a new town-house was erected on the main street, nearly opposite the M. E. Church, at

an expense of \$5976.55. The size of the building is 40×65 feet, with 30-foot posts. It consists of two stories, one 12-foot and the other 16-foot ceilings. The lower part is used for town purposes, while the upper part has been fitted up for a public hall, and which, through the efforts of a number of gentlemen, has been very conveniently and pleasantly furnished. There is also a basement, which has been converted into a "lock-up," for the entertainment of such travellers as seem, by their frequent visits, to appreciate the beauties of the town, but are, nevertheless, sadly lacking in funds necessary to procure the best accommodations.

A new building, of large dimensions, erected on the land owned by the Agricultural Society of Ridgefield, for fair purposes, is a prominent feature of the south part of the village, and marks the place where General Tryon's forces encamped.

Mr. D. H. Valden, of Titicus, and Mr. Lewis June, of Scotland, have also erected elegant dwellings, which add much to the appearance of this part of the town. Rev. L. W. Abbott, after a successful ministry of many years, has returned and fitted up a beautiful home about a mile north of the church of which he was for three years pastor.

Mr. George Main and Mr. Benjamin Partrick have also erected neat and pleasant cottages towards the lower end of the street.

The town is still without a lawyer, and the prospects of supporting one are now, as they have ever been, exceedingly poor.

A newspaper, *The Ridgefield Press*, was started some two years ago, which is still published, with a constantly increasing circulation. The lower part of the old



*Masonic Hall*, which has been recently moved back from the street, and tastily fitted up, is used by the publisher as a printing-office and an editorial room.

The best "water view" to be had in town, aside from that of Long Island Sound, is from the western declivity of West Mountain. Three beautiful lakes, two of which are represented in the opposite illustration, lie almost at your feet.

Ridgebury, in the northern part of the town, has changed but little for many years. A cluster of neat farm-houses surround a church equally neat. It is pleasantly located and is healthful and retired.

The elevated position of the whole town renders it pre-eminently free from many of the diseases which are so prevalent in less elevated regions. Especially is it healthful for children, and for such as are subject to malarial troubles. This fact is coming to be generally known, and every year all the available places of entertainment are secured at an early day. The gayety and parade of fashionable life are here laid aside, and those who seek rest and recreation are sure to be successful in their search. The facilities for reaching the place have been greatly improved. In 1870 a branch road was built, intersecting the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad at Branchville, a village four miles distant. It is now easily accessible to visitors, being about two hours by rail from New York City.

For beauty of scenery, for purity and healthfulness of climate, for quiet and peaceful retirement, few places offer such attractions as this little town; and, based upon the best foundations of prophecy, the future must more than realize the expectations and hopes of its warmest and truest friends.



# APPENDIX.

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## CENSUS OF THE TOWN.

1756	=	1115.
1810	=	2103.
1820	=	2301.
1830	=	2322.
1840	=	2474.
1850	=	2237.
1860	=	1910.
1870	=	2213.

The following persons have been elected from the town to represent the 11th District in the State Senate :

- 1834. John F. King.
- 1837. Samuel S. St. John.
- 1849. Joshua I. King.
- 1853. John B. Hyatt.
- 1867. Peter P. Cornen.
- 1875. Lewis H. Bailey.

## JUDGES OF PROBATE.

- 1841. Harvey Smith, served 1 year.
- 1842. William Sherwood, “ 2 years.
- 1844. Harvey Smith, “ 2 “

1846.	Jacob T. Haviland,	served 1 year.
1847	Harvey Smith,	“ 1 “
1848.	Ebenezer Hawley,	“ 4 years.
1852.	Edward Couch,	“ 2 “
1854.	Henry Smith, 2 <sup>d</sup> ,	“ 1 year.
1855.	Hiram K. Scott,	“ 15 years.
1870.	D. Smith Sholes,	“ 1 year.
1871.	Elijah L. Thomas,	“ 2 years.
1873.	Hiram K. Scott,	“ —

#### REPRESENTATIVES TO LEGISLATURE.

- 1740. James Benedict, Samuel Smith.
- 1741. James Benedict.
- 1742. James Benedict, Daniel Olmstead.
- 1743. James Benedict, Daniel Olmstead.
- 1744. James Benedict, Richard Olmstead.
- 1745. Timothy Keeler, Joseph Hawley.
- 1746. Richard Olmstead, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1747. Richard Olmstead, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1748. James Benedict, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1749. James Benedict, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1750. Samuel Olmstead, Stephen Smith.
- 1751. James Benedict, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1752. Richard Olmstead, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1753. Samuel Olmstead, Stephen Smith.
- 1754. Samuel Olmstead, Stephen Smith.
- 1755. Samuel Olmstead, Stephen Smith.
- 1756. Elijah Olmstead, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1757. Elijah Hawley.
- 1758. Elijah Hawley, Samuel Olmstead, S. Smith.
- 1759. Samuel Olmstead, John Benedict, Stephen Smith.

- 1760. Samuel Olmstead, Stephen Smith.
- 1761. Samuel Olmstead, Lemuel Abbott.
- 1762. Samuel Olmstead, Stephen Smith.
- 1763. Timothy Keeler, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1764. Samuel Olmstead, Timothy Keeler, John Benedict.
- 1765. Timothy Keeler, Stephen Smith.
- 1766. William Lee, Nathan Olmstead.
- 1767. William Lee, Nathan Olmstead, Samuel Olmstead, Stephen Smith.
- 1768. Samuel Olmstead, William Lee.
- 1769. Samuel Olmstead, William Lee, Philip Burr Bradley.
- 1770. Samuel Olmstead, Philip Burr Bradley, Benjamin Stebbins.
- 1771. William Lee, Co<sup>l</sup>. Philip Burr Bradley, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1772. Co<sup>l</sup>. Philip Burr Bradley, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1773. Co<sup>l</sup>. Philip Burr Bradley, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1774. Co<sup>l</sup>. Philip Burr Bradley, Samuel Olmstead.
- 1775. Co<sup>l</sup>. Philip B. Bradley, Samuel Olmstead, Capt. Lemuel Morehouse.
- 1776. Samuel Olmstead, Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Stephen Smith.
- 1777. William Forrester, Nathan Olmstead, John Benedict.
- 1778. Nathan Olmstead, T. Keeler, W. Forrester, S. Olmstead.
- 1779. Samuel Olmstead, William Forrester, Timothy Keeler, Jr., Stephen Norris, John Benedict.
- 1780. Nathan Olmstead, John Benedict, Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Capt. Jonah Foster, Timothy Keeler, Isaac Doolittle.



1781. Timothy Keeler, Ichabod Doolittle, Capt.  
David Olmstead.
1782. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Capt. David Olmstead.
1783. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Capt. David Olmstead.
1784. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Capt. David Olmstead.
1785. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Capt. David Olmstead.
1786. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Capt. D. Olmstead.
1787. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Capt. D. Olmstead.
1788. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, William Forrester, David  
Olmstead.
1789. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, David Olmstead, Joshua  
King.
1790. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Joshua King.
1791. Co<sup>l</sup>. P. B. Bradley, Joshua King, David Olm-  
stead.
1792. Joshua King, William Forrester, Amos Baker.
1793. Joshua King, David Olmstead.
1794. Joshua King, William Forrester.
1795. Joshua King, David Olmstead, W<sup>m</sup>. Forrester.
1796. Joshua King, W<sup>m</sup>. Forrester, David Olmstead.
1797. David Olmstead, Samuel Dauchy.
1798. Samuel Dauchy, Nathan Smith, Joshua King,  
David Olmstead.
1799. Joshua King, Nathan Dauchy.
1800. Jacob Olmstead, Eliphalet Brush, Joshua King,  
Job Smith.
1801. Nathan Dauchy, Jared Olmstead.
1802. Joshua King, Samuel Stebbins.
1803. Samuel Stebbins, Nathan Dauchy, Jr.
1804. Nathan Dauchy, Jr., Timothy Keeler, Nathan  
Smith.
1805. Nathan Dauchy, Nathan Smith, Job Smith,  
Jonathan Keeler.

1806. Job Smith, Jonathan Keeler, Samuel Stebbins,  
Timothy Keeler.
1807. Nathan Smith, Timothy Keeler, 2<sup>d</sup>, John Jones,  
Jesse S. Bradley.
1808. J. Jones, Jesse S. Bradley, Jacob Dauchy, Tim-  
othy Keeler, 2<sup>d</sup>.
1809. Jacob Dauchy, Timothy Keeler, Nathan Dau-  
chy, Jesse S. Bradley.
1810. Nathan Dauchy, Aaron Stuart, Daniel Jones.
1811. Joshua King, Gamaliel Benedict.
1812. Joshua King, Benjamin Lynes, Matthew Keeler,  
Nathan Dauchy.
1813. Nathan Smith, Samuel Stebbins.
1814. Daniel Jones, Seth Boughton, Jesse S. Bradley,  
Jeremiah Mead.
1815. Jesse S. Bradley, Jeremiah Mead. *Special*  
*Session*—Abner Gilbert, Jr., Nathan Dauchy.
1816. Joshua King, Timothy Keeler, W<sup>m</sup>. Hawley.
1817. W<sup>m</sup>. Hawley, Gamaliel Benedict, Matthew  
Keeler.
1818. Eliphalet Brush, Jabez M. Gilbert.
1819. Gamaliel Benedict, Bradley Hull.
1820. Benjamin Lynes, Elijah Hawley.
1821. Benjamin Lynes, Aaron Lee.
1822. Aaron Lee, Lot Forrester.
1823. Aaron Lee, Riah Nash.
1824. William Hawley, Richard Randall.
1825. John F. King, William Crocker.
1826. Jesse S. Bradley, John F. King.
1827. Jesse S. Bradley, Jabez M. Gilbert.
1828. Jabez M. Gilbert, Lot Forrester.
1829. Jesse S. Bradley, Aaron Lee.
1830. Aaron Lee, Ebenezer Hawley.

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